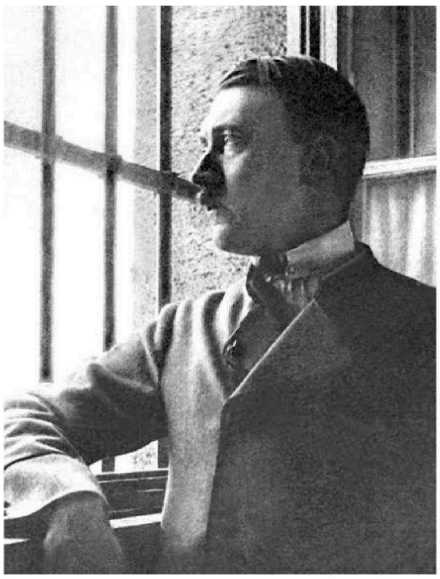
Hitler Behind Fortress Walls:
A Picture from Dark Days



As witnessed and published, based on official documents, by SS-Sturmführer Otto Lurker, former prison guard at Landsberg am Lech, later at Zweibriicken

Second Edition
With nineteen photographs

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Introduction

Adolf Hitler was imprisoned at the Bavarian correctional facility in Landsberg am Lech from November 11th, 1923, to February 22nd, 1924, as a prisoner held in protective custody and under investigation, and from April 1st, 1924, to December 20th, 1924, as a prisoner serving a sentence in a fortress prison.

In later years, when that period had long since become a thing of the past, he often referred to this time as the hardest period of his life: this statement, coming from the lips of one of the most brilliant Germans of modern times—a man who had learned from his youth to to endure hardship and deprivation, who for four years lived through the horrors of a massive international conflict, mostly on the front lines, and proved through outstanding bravery that life meant nothing to him for life's sake alone, and who in the postwar years had become as hard as steel in his constant struggle against the superior forces of a vast state apparatus, — can only give a glimpse of the magnitude of the inner struggle that was victoriously waged here by a powerful personality.
Only one man can really describe it as it demands to be told: Adolf Hitler himself - thus, the following lines can provide only a meager glimpse into the life of the great Führer, as witnessed and observed at the time, and—where memory failed—supplemented by official documents.

The intention behind writing these lines was to introduce the people to the embodiment of the new, national idea—the man to whom a supernatural will had entrusted the leadership of Germany.
I had intended for years to describe Hitler's formative years to the public, as the works published to date on this subject are either incomplete or distorted - however, under the old system, it was impossible to obtain the official documents necessary for a comprehensive account, and moreover, at that time, various criminal proceedings of a political nature were pending against me, such as a request for disciplinary proceedings filed by the Zweibrücken State Police Office, as well as another case for breach of the peace pending with the Landau/Pfalz District Attorney's Office: thus, in order not to further exacerbate my situation as a civil servant, my political friends advised me to postpone the publication of the work until a more favorable time.
Now, that time of silence is over, and one may once again stand up for the truth in Germany.

Thanks are due to the State Ministry of Justice in Munich, which granted access to the files, and also to the current board of the Landsberg a. L. Fortress Prison, Mr. von Dreer, Senior Government Councilor, who graciously facilitated the work and provided the photographs, as well as Sergeant Franz Hemmrich, who was a faithful collaborator, sharing his many memories from the period of confinement.

- Zweibrücken (Rheinpfalz), in the summer of 1933
The Editor

A Memorable Night

November 11th, 1923, 10:00 p.m.

A cold autumn storm rages and roars over the battlements and roofs of the Bavarian prison in Landsberg am Lech, shaking the bars and gates with frenzied fury, as if it were trying to force its way in.
The deep night spreads an impenetrable veil over the tall buildings, whose shadows dissolve ghostlike into the darkness; dead silence reigns inside the cell block, interrupted only occasionally by the muffled footsteps of the night watchman.
Every now and then, a tormented sound drifts in from somewhere, and a faint, steady sound seems to flow through the building like the soft murmur of a silent master: is it the hot breath of the many unfortunate sleepers, which seems to come from cramped cells; is it the invisible workings of time's passage?
Or is a great event about to unfold? Something seems to be in the air.
The past few days had been filled with a succession of events: there was talk of a National Socialist coup in the state capital of Munich, of demonstrations and bloody clashes at the Feldherrnhalle, and of numerous deaths.
The news reached the provinces in a muddle of unclear and contradictory reports, and even in the isolated world of the large prison, the strange rumors found their way in.
The incident seemed to be hiding somewhere—was it crouching like a maliciously grinning goblin on the battlement of the watchtower, staring through a barred window with wicked eyes, or did it weigh down the empty corridors and alcoves as an oppressive silence?

A shrill ringing mercilessly shattered the nighttime silence, and a strong hand knocked impatiently on the door of my office: "Come to the director immediately!"
Two minutes later, I was standing in the brightly lit private office of the prison warden, Senior Government Councilor Leybold.
"We must expect," my superior begins in a serious voice, "that Adolf Hitler will arrive tonight: according to a report, he was arrested this evening in Uffing am Staffelsee, and his transfer to protective custody is imminent; since we must anticipate a possible attempt by his followers to free him, our top priority is to secure the institution against attacks."
While the measures to be taken are being discussed, a telephone message arrives from the State Ministry of Justice in Munich stating that a strong detachment of the Reichswehr from the local garrison, under the command of an officer, will take over security at the facility.
"Make the necessary arrangements so that the prisoner can be housed in the fortress" - with this brief instruction, I take my leave of the director, whose cheerful expression belies his deep concern.

The prison clock strikes half past ten, and the chimes quickly fade away in the howling night wind—I hurry to the fortress building located some distance away.
Since the plan is to house Hitler there in a separate room, surrounded by military guards as a precaution, I roughly rouse the fortress's sole occupant, Count Arco-Valley[1], from his sleep and take him, equipped only with the bare necessities, to a cell in the infirmary.

[1] Anton Graf von Arco auf Valley, German-Bavarian nobleman who had assassinated the Bavarian Prime Minister Kurt Eisner in 1919; he was released from prison after being pardoned in 1927. - The Translator

Cold and unwelcoming in their functional simplicity, the deserted rooms of the fortress stare back at me: their last inhabitants, almost exclusively duelists, had never stayed for more than a short time.
The Baltic painter Otto von Kursell—whose excellent portraits of Hitler later graced the newspapers—and Alfred Rosenberg had been among them, but now the rooms had long lain silent and unused; the simple bed is quickly made, and soon a fire is crackling in the stove in the anteroom, its acrid smoke struggling in vain against the cold night air.

A bell rings, summoning me to the gate: Hitler's arrival is announced. I hurry down the stairs and through the hallways toward the gate.
But halfway there, a strange group of people comes toward me, and in the glow of the sparse lighting and against the gloomy backdrop of the bare prison walls, they look peculiar: from his tall stature and uniform, I recognize the prison warden, and at his side, between two plainclothes police officers—one of whom is leading a powerful dog—walks proudly and upright the man whose entire life has been a struggle and a battle for Germany's freedom and greatness: Adolf Hitler.
The Iron Cross, First Class, adorns his chest, and hanging over his shoulders is the brown rubber coat he wore during the march to the Feldherrnhalle.
His left arm rests in a sling—it was injured on the pavement when he fell, as the bullets fired by the state police whistled over the heads of the marchers.
Bareheaded, his face pale and haggard, with a stray lock of hair falling across it, the arrested man—every inch a leader—now walks silently as a prisoner amid his escorts through the dimly lit, vast cell block, which lies in deep slumber.
The small convoy approaches the fortress—a key creaks in the lock—and we have reached our destination.
While the director bids farewell to the leader of the accompanying police officers, Lieutenant Velleville, I help the prisoner change his clothes.
The turmoil of the past few days seems to have taken a heavy toll on him, both physically and mentally: he wants neither food nor drink, and completely exhausted, Hitler throws himself onto his simple bed; the door then closes behind him.

The clang of weapons and the heavy footsteps of marching soldiers become audible: the Reichswehr detachment, which had already been reported, marches through the fortress gate.
Steel helmets and rifles gleam dully in the lamplight; orders ring out, and the rooms fill with armed men; sentries are posted, and machine guns, hand grenades, and ammunition crates are brought in.
The commander of the unit, Lieutenant Imhoff, takes up quarters in the room next to Adolf Hitler's; a telephone line is laid to the barracks, though it is cut several times that very same night.
In the hallway outside Hitler's room, soldiers sit and lie around, smoking and chatting, warming their limbs by the glowing stove and listening to an old noncommissioned officer's war stories.
Behind the locked door, however, lies Adolf Hitler—the fighter for Germany's future.

In Protective Custody and Pretrial Detention

A pale morning dawns, casting its light on a small field camp; the aroma of strong coffee wafts across the fortress's forecourt, and the soldiers prepare their morning brew in field kettles.
Hitler is already awake, and traces of the eventful night are still visible on his face.
The soldiers begin to clear the field and take up quarters on the upper floor of the fortress; now, only the officer and the guard remain downstairs.
The necessary formalities at the chancellery and with the facility's doctor are taken care of: the doctor diagnoses Hitler with a dislocated left shoulder.
Day follows day, and police and judicial officials arrive for interrogations, though a representative of a local court, appearing in a frock coat and top hat, causes quite a stir: people suspect a government operation, but as it turns out, however, that the man has just come directly from a funeral.
The experiences and impressions of the last few difficult days have taken a heavy toll on Hitler, and moreover, his injured arm is not getting any better, so the prisoner is transferred to a cell in the infirmary; meanwhile the Reichswehr guard withdraws and is replaced by a unit of the state police, which subsequently takes over guard duty.

On November 14th, 1923, pursuant to an arrest warrant, the Munich I People's Court's public prosecutor's office converted Hitler's preventive detention into pretrial detention.
The first visitors arrive, and they are permitted only with a special pass from the public prosecutor's office only for a short time; the prison warden or his immediate deputy, Government Councilor Bauer, also supervises each meeting.
The deeply troubled expression on the face of Dr. Roder, Hitler's attorney and advisor, is striking: he is the one who will defend Hitler in his upcoming trial, though he, too, is not allowed to speak with Hitler alone at first, and only later does he gain unrestricted access.
Then, thickly veiled, Mrs. von Scheubner-Richter arrives - her husband fell on the march to the Feldherrnhalle.
At a loss, his comrades, with all sorts of questions, wish to see their Führer, but only the most urgent visits can be accommodated.
Hitler greets with great joy his loyal companion—his German shepherd—whom he has not seen in a long time, and whom one of his friends is occasionally allowed to bring along during a visit.

Slowly, amid the dreary monotony of imprisonment, the days creep by in the cramped cell; meanwhile, a number of Hitler's supporters have also been taken into protective custody and transported to Landsberg.
The detainees were housed in a section of the cell block where, for this purpose, a common room separated from the other inmates of the facility had been created by enclosing the ground-floor section with a roof.
It was a strangely diverse group of people whom fate had brought together here: fundamentally different in age and background, in social and societal status, they were yet all united in their deep reverence for their Führer and in their defense of their political views.
The daring head teacher Julius Streicher; Anton Drechsler, one of the seven founders of the National Socialist Party; pharmacist Gregor Strasser; Prince Wrede, who, as a former cavalry officer, always

walked about in high riding boots[2], and the former Bavarian Minister of Justice, Dr. Christian Roth, were among the detainees, who came from all walks of life.
Also among them was the nationalist "poet of freedom" Dietrich Eckart, the translator of *Peer Gynt*; however, he was released after 10 days in prison due to illness, and soon succumbed to his serious ailment.

Christmas Eve 1923 was approaching, and seated around the smoking stove in the foyer, sipping a modest glass of punch, were the men whose fearless defense of their convictions had landed them behind prison walls.
With a subdued "cheers," they remembered their Führer, with whom they were bound by a shared destiny through struggles and hardship - in a cell in the infirmary, however, Adolf Hitler stood at the window, gazing pensively out at the hospital garden, which lay bathed in winter silence.

February 1924 brought the long-awaited freedom for all the prisoners held in protective custody - Adolf Hitler, meanwhile, was still in the prison infirmary.
At the request of the public prosecutor's office, the prison physician at the time issued the following medical report on his general condition:

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To the Administration of the Prison
Landsberg a. L.
Re: Medical Report on the Mental State of Pretrial Detainee Adolf Hitler

An assessment of Adolf Hitler's mental state and psychological behavior has revealed that he is not burdened by his ancestry, upbringing, or past history - his coup on November 8th, 1923—which is often described as folly and an act of madness—could, however, easily give rise to the impression that Hitler undertook this coup and its preparations as a result of a pathological mental state.
However, when one hears Hitler's own motives and explanations regarding this coup, one arrives at the firm conclusion that Hitler was always in full control of his free will and self-determination, and was not pathologically influenced in his mental faculties, even if the circumstances and motives for this coup are considered flawed.
The internal and external influences that affected Hitler in this matter undoubtedly played a major role in determining his course of action, but they certainly did not exert any pathological compulsion on his free will: even the severe emotional reaction—including a temporary, pathological depression—that Hitler experienced for a brief period after the coup does not suggest any pathological predisposition on his part.

Hitler is deeply inspired by the idea of a great, unified Germany, and possesses a very lively temperament, along with outstanding oratory skills and political—and especially historical—knowledge far exceeding the average: these positive qualities of Hitler's were correctly recognized by leading political figures and were the reason Hitler was frequently called upon as a public speaker to stir patriotic sentiment.

[2] I'm unsure who this is describing - there is the statue of Prince Karl Philip von Werde at the Feldherrnhalle, but he's not describing that, so probably a nickname? - The Translator

After the founding of the National Socialist Party, Hitler, acting on his own initiative, successfully spread the ethno-nationalist Greater German ideal among the broad masses of the people, and through his fascinating personality and his compelling oratorical talent, he influenced both individuals and the masses, gradually laying the groundwork for everything that led to the coup of November 8th.
These events, as with many other major occurrences (such as the stirring up of war enthusiasm), are rooted in the normal psychological makeup of individuals and, in particular, of the masses; however, this way of thinking and acting—which was partly brought about through suggestion and autosuggestion—may not always stand up to subsequent unbiased criticism, yet it need not necessarily be pathological.
In any case, whether and to what extent Hitler is responsible for the course of action he undertook is not a matter for the physician to judge.

During the coup on November 8th, Hitler suffered a dislocation of his left shoulder with a fracture of the humeral head, followed by a very painful traumatic neurosis; he is still undergoing ongoing medical treatment, and will likely suffer permanent partial stiffness and painful symptoms in his left shoulder, but his capacity to stand trial should not impaired by this.

Signed:
Senior Medical Councilor Dr. Brinsteiner, Personal and District Physician
Landsberg am Lech, January 8th, 1924

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While Adolf Hitler was in pretrial detention, the preliminary investigation was concluded, and charges of high treason were brought against him and his associates.
The intention was to hold the trial at the Landsberg Fortress Prison, and extensive preparations had already been made when the plan—probably due to technical difficulties—proved unfeasible - thus, suddenly, on February 22nd, 1924, at 8:45 a.m., Hitler was transported by car to the Munich Penitentiary for the upcoming main trial.

The political trial of Adolf Hitler and his associates for high treason—arguably one of the largest in the history of the pre- and post-war periods—began on February 26th, 1924, before the bench of the Munich I People's Court amid a massive crowd of onlookers and representatives of the domestic and foreign press; the course of the trial, which provided deep insight into the nature and goals of the nationalist freedom movement ignited by Hitler, has already been documented by an authoritative author (see: "Der Hitlerprozeß" [*The Hitler Trial*], Deutscher Volksverlag Dr. E. Boepple, Munich).
In his closing statement, Hitler said:

"The greatest gain of November 8th is that it did not lead to depression, but rather helped to inspire the people to the highest degree - I believe that the hour will come when the masses who stand in the streets today with our flag will unite with those who fired upon us on November 8th.
The army we have built up is growing faster by the day, by the hour, and especially in these days, I have the proud hope that the time will come when these wild hordes will become battalions, the battalions regiments, and the regiments divisions; that the old cockade will be retrieved from the dirt; that the old

flags will flutter in the lead once more, and that reconciliation will then come at the eternal, final judgment of God, which we are willing to face.
Then, from our bones and from our graves, the voice of the court—the only one called to pass judgment upon us—will speak: it is not you, gentlemen, who will pronounce judgment upon us, for the verdict will be delivered by the eternal court of history, which will rule on the charges brought against us.
I know the verdict that you will render, but that court will not ask us: have you committed high treason or not?
That court will judge us—the Quartermaster General of the old army, his officers, and soldiers—who, as Germans, sought the best for their people and fatherland, and who were willing to fight and die; even if you find us guilty a thousand times over, the goddess of history's eternal judgment will smile as she tears up the prosecutor's indictment and the court's verdict, for she acquits us."

The trial, which took place in the premises of the former Infantry School on Blutenburgstraße, ended on March 27th, 1924, after 24 days of proceedings, with the following verdict, which had been awaited with the greatest anticipation by the entire world:

"The People's Court for the Munich I Regional Court District, based on oral proceedings in public sessions held from February 26th to March 27th, 1924, presided over by Regional Court Director Neithardt, issued the following verdict on April 1st, 1924, at 10:05 a.m:

In the criminal case against Adolf Hitler, unmarried, writer, and nine co-defendants for high treason, among other charges, the following verdict was delivered:
Hitler, Friedrich Weber, Hermann Kriebel, and Ernst Pöhner are each sentenced to 5 years of imprisonment in Landsberg for one count of high treason.
The following periods of pretrial detention shall be credited: 4 months and 2 weeks for Hitler, 4 months and 3 weeks for Weber, and 2 months and 2 weeks each for Kriebel and Pöhner.
Furthermore, each of the above-named individuals is sentenced to a fine of 200 Goldmarks, or, in lieu thereof, to 20 days of imprisonment in a military prison.
The convicted individuals are offered the prospect of probation following the completion of an additional 6-month term of imprisonment in a military prison."

In the reasoning for the verdict, Adolf Hitler's character was described with the following statements:

"Hitler is a German-Austrian, though he considers himself a German - thus, in the view of the court, the provision of §9, Paragraph II of the Republic Protection Act cannot be applied in accordance with its meaning and purpose to a man who thinks and feels as German as Hitler, who voluntarily served 4 1/2 years in the German army, who earned high military decorations for outstanding bravery in the face of the enemy, who was wounded and otherwise suffered damage to his health, and who was discharged by the military and placed under the supervision of the Munich I District Command."

Thus, once again, the law drew a final line under a half-written chapter in German history - now, Adolf Hitler and his fellow prisoners faced a long prison term behind the high walls of Landsberg Fortress.

The Landsberg Fortress Prison

The only fortress in Bavaria formerly designated for political prisoners—the Oberhaus, situated on a steep cliff near the old Danube city of Passau—had been abandoned at the end of the war.
The Niederschönenfeld Juvenile Detention Center was converted into a fortress prison for those convicted at the time of supporting the Bavarian Soviet Republic; then, beginning in January 1920, Landsberg am Lech was also designated as a fortress prison, with a former work building of the Landsberg am Lech, situated somewhat apart from the main complex, being converted into a fortress prison wing.
This wing contained a number of prison cells and spacious halls; a large garden planted with fruit trees also served as a place for the fortress prisoners to take their daily walks.
Admittedly, the fortress lacked that touch of medieval romance characteristic of old castles, even though the prison's gatehouse gives the impression of a castle.

The sprawling prison complex, which houses approximately 500 criminal inmates and includes the fortress detention wing designated for political prisoners, is located directly on the old postal road that led south from Augsburg; the facility, a thoroughly modern prison building, opened in 1909.
Across from the prison, some distance away on the eastern bank of the rushing Lech River, lies the charming old town of Landsberg: nestled against the steep, abruptly rising slope, it is a place popular with visitors and painters alike, thanks to its beautiful market square and its old nooks and crannies.
Of course, for those who can view the medieval townscape only from a distance through barred windows, a somber memory of it may linger.

As early as 1920, Count Arco-Valley—who had been sentenced to death for the murder of Bavarian Minister-President Kurt Eisner and then pardoned to serve a life sentence in the fortress—had been brought to Landsberg, where he was virtually the fortress's sole inmate for nearly five years.
Occasionally, a student convicted of some dueling offense would also serve his sentence there, which was usually only brief; temporarily, the fortress's rooms housed either prisoners in protective custody or the military guard detail.
The building underwent a complete internal transformation during Hitler's pretrial detention, with a series of prison cells being built into the large, mostly unused halls, while barracks were also created for the military guard detail; other measures had also been taken to accommodate a larger number of fortress prisoners.

Hitler's Arrival at the Fortress

April 1st, 1924, 5:00 p.m

Spring winds sweep across fields and meadows; the sun's warming rays are melting the last patches of snow, and Schneeglöckchen[3] and Krokos[4] have already poked their little heads out of the ground; a blackbird sings cheerfully on the roof ridge.

A car pulls up in front of the large gate of the Landsberg Fortress Prison, and several gentlemen step out. The gatekeeper greets them respectfully, for among them is an old acquaintance: Adolf Hitler. Accompanied by several police officers, Lieutenant Colonel Kriebel and Dr. Weber also report to serve their sentences.
Pöhner, the former Higher Regional Court judge and then-Chief of Police of Munich who was also convicted, is not among them; his health does not yet permit the sentence to be carried out.

Hitler looks well despite the strain of the trial days: he seems glad to have this turbulent time behind him. The escort leads the three convicts into the fortress: it is still daylight, and the rooms, already familiar to Hitler, no longer look as terrifying as they did on that memorable night of November 11th, 1923.
The three prisoners move into the cells assigned to them in the fortress, where the smell of fresh oil paint still lingers everywhere—a circumstance for which the burly Kriebel has absolutely no patience.

Hitler is assigned Room No. 7 on the first floor; his neighbor is Kriebel in Room No. 8, while Dr. Weber moves into Room No. 9, which is somewhat smaller than the others, but has one more window.
The furnishings of the fortress quarters consist of an iron bed frame with a mattress and a wool blanket, a table, two chairs, a closet, and a nightstand; Kriebel, who has brought along an old set of house rules dating from peacetime, jokingly remarks that he is also entitled to a dresser.
Hitler is taciturn, and his gaze wanders through the tall barred window into the distance, where, far off on the horizon, the Bavarian mountains greet him, half shrouded in fog: the sight fills his heart with bitterness.

The next day, the three prisoners are summoned to the administrative office to complete the usual formalities; the prison doctor assesses the health of each individual, and finally, the clerk records their personal details, which are entered into the registry.
Upon returning to the fortress, they are surprised to find a fourth fellow prisoner: he is a young former member of the Reichswehr who must serve a 42-day sentence of imprisonment in the fortress for a military offense.
His cell is on the ground floor, and he passes the time by making the mattresses the fortress still lacks - Hitler takes pity on the young man, who has little cash but all the more of an appetite, which is why Hitler shares some of his food with him.

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[3] German for "snowdrops", in English they refer to the *Galanthus nivalis*, which are the earliest blooming flowers in spring. - The Translator
[4] German for saffron flowers. - The Translator

Hitler passes the time reading or meeting with his two friends in the garden; the Reichswehr soldier also timidly dares to join them, and is met with friendly acceptance.
The evening draws to a close, and the prisoners retire to bed early: the first day in the fortress is over.

The House Rules

In every barracks room hung a small, neatly bound booklet: the house rules.
Its contents, which at first glance seemed unremarkable, made it clear to the reader that from then on he would have to conduct his actions and duties strictly according to their letter.
It regulated the course of the day roughly as follows:

The prison cells remained open, but the common area in front of them—into which the individual doors led—was locked from the outside at 10 p.m. in the summer and 9 p.m. in the winter; at the same time, the lights were also extinguished.
Prisoners who wished to read or write in their cells after this time were permitted, upon request to the administration and for a small fee, to keep their cells lit until midnight: the prisoners were happy to make use of this privilege.
The rooms were tidied daily by the prison inmates under the supervision of an official; the inmates also cleaned the prisoners' clothes and shoes in exchange for a corresponding payment to the institution's treasury; otherwise, the fortress prisoners had no contact with the prison inmates.
Meals—consisting of breakfast, lunch, and dinner—were brought from the institution's kitchen, and were the same meals served to the officials residing in the prison.
The prisoners ate together in the day room at a long, set table; as a beverage, they were allowed to consume half a liter of beer or one Schoppen[5] of wine daily.
Food could be procured or sent to them, but all packages were subject to inspection, just as all incoming and outgoing mail was subject to censorship.
Going out into the city was not permitted, but as long as it did not interfere with general order, the prisoners were allowed to engage in their own activities; there was no compulsory labor for the prisoners.
Visitors were permitted for a total of 6 hours per week.
For their time outdoors, which was limited to six hours daily, the fortress prisoners had access to a section of the institution's garden, which was located a few steps from the fortress walls and was bordered on one side by the fortification wall and on the other by the buildings of the institution's school and church; a section of the garden that was off-limits was marked off by signs bearing the inscription "Boundary."

All of this was recounted in the small, blue-bound booklet, and its contents remained the guiding principle that ran like a common thread through the lives of the fortress prisoners.

[5] Meaning a quarter or a half-liter; this word is usually used to describe the drinking glass for wine. - The Translator

Hitler’s 35th Birthday

April 20th, 1924

Having to celebrate the return of a day that was eventful in one’s own life from behind prison walls is a strange thing.
Rarely does memory touch the soul more powerfully than in isolation: it takes great faith in one’s own strength to overcome the heavy burdens of the past, and even the best and most well-meaning wishes, in whatever form they may come, cannot help one overcome this—a lingering bitterness that leaves a hollow aftertaste.
Adolf Hitler, however, possessed that strength: he felt it welling up from the very depths of his heart.

Hitler’s 35th birthday was approaching, and it may have been a promising symbol that he was able to celebrate it on the very day of the Resurrection.
Easter brings light, and his gaze, too, was fixed on the light; he wanted to lead a people freed from bondage into the radiant circle of that light.

The birthday was a major event for the fortress, and even the gray prison walls seemed to be illuminated by a festive glow on that day.
The day had been foreshadowed some time in advance by an ever-increasing influx of mail, and while on the morning of April 20th, it was Kriebel and Dr. Weber who were the first to shake hands with their fellow prisoner, as the day progressed, the mail brought a veritable flood of cards, letters, and telegrams. Congratulations poured in from all parts of Germany and from all walks of life: loyal friends, party comrades, enthusiastic admirers, and steadfast comrades-in-arms sent heartfelt congratulations to their revered leader.
Verses imbued with fervent enthusiasm were dedicated to Hitler, and the nationalist newspapers published an excellent portrait of the Führer drawn by Otto von Kursell.
A mountain of packages piled up; Hitler’s private room and the day room resembled a forest of flowers, to the point that it smelled like a greenhouse; a line of visitors also offered personal congratulations, though for the sake of order, a number of them could not be admitted.
A powerful declaration of loyalty to Adolf Hitler shone through all these expressions of sympathy: it seemed to reveal here the great significance of the return of the day on which the great Führer was born, and that a large part of the German people was firmly convinced of his lofty mission.

The day was over, and the sun had long since set behind the edge of the forest.
Amid all this splendor stood Adolf Hitler, delighting in the gifts—but not merely for their own sake, for he saw in every wish a sincere expression of faith in his all-conquering power: this sense of loyalty was Hitler’s finest birthday gift at the fortress.
In the small fortress parlor on the ground floor, however, sat a man for whom Hitler’s birthday meant a great but pleasant effort: the Reichswehr soldier - he made an honest effort to devour a large portion of the ephemeral gifts brought to Hitler, which he succeeded in doing thanks to his healthy appetite.

Fellow Inmates Arrive

May had arrived, and the trees in the fortress garden were in full bloom.
Hitler often met with his two loyal followers for a walk together in the garden: one couldn't always sit in the small fortress parlor poring over books, for the sun was too tempting.

When Hitler, in his short leather pants, strolled among the trees or along the high wall, engaged in lively conversation with his friends, his powerful figure was the embodiment of unyielding willpower.
Although the world in which the prisoners moved about was limited, there were still all sorts of things to see that the eye had never had time for before: there was the large spider weaving its intricate web in a sheltered corner of the wall—and there, a colorful butterfly swayed dreamily on a freshly opened flower.
Meanwhile, the highly learned Dr. Weber knew how to explain everything so beautifully and precisely in accordance with the laws of nature—after all, one could not always be talking about politics!
Hitler's rich inner world, however, did not linger too long on such small wonders of nature, but flowed again and again beyond the walled-in world and remained fixed where it felt bound by fate: on the plight of the German people!
But when, lost in such thoughts and reflections, the friends had reached the end of the path, the sign reading "Boundary" abruptly brought their thoughts—which had flown away like stray birds—back to harsh reality; then the realization of their powerlessness would settle in like a dark shadow over their spirits.

Right at the beginning of the month, the first of the 32 of Hitler's fellow fighters—almost all of whom had been sentenced to one year and three months in the fortress in a subsequent trial—arrived at the fortress to begin their sentences; they were followed one by one over the course of the next few months, so that the fortress was filled to capacity.
Although the prisoners were housed together in various rooms, the space proved too limited, so that the vacant wing of the cell block—normally reserved for prisoners awaiting trial—had to be used to accommodate them - this, however, did not hinder social interaction among the fortress inmates.
According to official records, there were 32 prisoners in the fortress in October 1924.
Every new arrival was, of course, greeted by those already present with great fanfare, and often in a boisterous manner: Hitler himself warmly expressed his joy at seeing them again, even though it always pained him to find one of his loyal followers in this very place.
The newcomer had to endure a veritable barrage of all sorts of questions about this and that, but above all about the political situation, and it usually took quite some time before he had found his bearings; the comrades would then step in to help and offer guidance, made arrangements for storing belongings, pitched in with money and small items, and tried to dispel the gloomy thoughts caused by separation from wife and child—most of the prisoners were married—through wit and good humor.
If there happened to be a troublemaker among them, he was usually given a stern talking-to—in a painless but unmistakable manner—by Hitler himself, and the "cured" individual would then fall in line with the unwritten laws of camaraderie and self-discipline that prevailed among the fortress prisoners.

A celebration of a very special kind was the "baptism" of a newly arrived fortress prisoner: the "baptizee" had to undress and was given a loincloth to wear; then he was strapped down to chairs arranged in a row and smeared with a mixture of soap and soot.

The “baptizee” was then shaved with a huge wooden knife and then given a cold shower from above; finally, howling and chattering his teeth, the “baptized” prisoner disappeared into his cell, only to rejoin his comrades later over a soothing cup of tea - Hitler did not personally take part in such scenes, but he was no killjoy, and had complete understanding for a harmless prank.

The relatively large number of prisoners naturally led to a lively atmosphere, but despite all this, as the days passed with the regularity of clockwork, the specter of boredom began to set in among the fortress’s inmates, so that a large portion of the prisoners warmly welcomed the opportunity to work.
Among those eager to work were enough people who, by virtue of their former professions, were able to take charge of the tasks assigned to them by the prison administration.
While one group, initiated into the secrets of gardening by the fortress prisoner Gerum, dug up, planted, and tended the large flower beds in the fortress garden, another section, under the former construction engineer Hamm, created a wide, clean path.
Since the latter was to be laid at a lower level, the earth had to be tackled vigorously with picks and shovels, and the remaining gravel was hauled away by the prisoners using handcarts: the sight of the prisoners galloping with their carts to the unloading site was not unlike an advancing artillery unit.
Hamm worked with a plumb line and a spirit level, as if he were leveling a major highway.
Yet another group created a lovely, shrub-planted garden in one of the prison’s exercise yards: this was under the direction of Lieutenant Colonel Kriebel.
Since the prisoners had been given drill suits and wide-brimmed straw hats to wear over their own clothes upon request, Kriebel looked like a Brazilian coffee planter in this outfit: it was understandable then that the work was not without laughter and lighthearted banter.
It is telling that the camaraderie fostered by Hitler found beautiful expression here: the former officer tended the vines; the unskilled laborer wielded the pickaxe, and the college graduate pushed the same cart alongside the craftsman.

The administration paid the prisoners a fair wage for their work, which lasted five hours a day; in addition, on days of extreme heat, they were granted an extra half liter of beer daily, which greatly boosted their enthusiasm for work—especially among the prisoners from Munich, including [Edmund] Heines and [Karl] Fiehler.
Hitler did not participate in the work since his day, filled from morning to evening with writing, was often interrupted by numerous visitors - yet even here, he took a keen interest in the work of his fellow prisoners.
Later on, the work of tilling the soil and gardening was replaced by splitting firewood, with the logs then being stacked into a circular cone—a task that Lieutenant Robert [Heinrich] Wagner particularly enjoyed performing.

Even in Prison, the Movement's Followers Do Not Abandon Their Führer

During his time in prison, Hitler received a vast number of letters that constitute an unparalleled pledge of loyalty; however, most of the letters were withheld by the prison administration because of their allegedly "violent, threatening" content.

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Below are some transcriptions of such letters:

Biederitz-Magdeburg, April 4th, 1924

To Mr. Adolf Hitler,

Most Esteemed Mr. Hitler!
Pain and anger overwhelmed us when, on the 1st of this month, we received the special edition and learned from it that they intend to lock you—our Hitler—behind prison walls for five years.
Like scorn and mockery, like a punch in the face, like lashes of a whip, this outrageous verdict—which has been handed down against our beloved Führer—strikes us National Socialists: it has been handed down according to Jewish-Roman law, which is alien to our nature and essence, and does not constitute law for us Germans.
But let the courts judge as they will, for we know who the traitor was on November 9th—not our Hitler and the other loyalists, but those three who lack any German or nationalistic thinking, who know nothing of loyalty among men or courage, who did not shy away from shooting down true sons of Germania.
And why? Out of base self-interest, because they themselves wanted to stage a coup, not in the spirit of Hitler and Ludendorff, but in the spirit of the Bavarian People's Party.

How much murderous outcry was raised when Eisner, the Jew—that traitor to the state and the people—was shot down? But now that true, core German men have been slaughtered, people do not ask who the murderers were, but instead condone the act and call the victims high traitors.
November 9th, 1923, is a disgrace and a shame for our fatherland, but the people will yet come to realize—as we, the faithful, already know—that it was our very best who fell for us on that bloody day, who fell for the cause of the people, and who were murdered because they wanted to free the nation and the state from the clutches of the traitors.
We pledge unwavering loyalty and faith to our Führer and appoint him an honorary member of the "Arier-Verbandes Deutschlands" [Aryan Association of Germany].

With loyal regards and the Heil salute, Aryan Association of Germany
I. A. Karl Schröter, Biederitz near Magdeburg, Kaiserstr. 13.

***

Klagenfurt, October 9th, 1924
To the Führer of the German Freedom Movement, Adolf Hitler
Landsberg Fortress

We, the National Socialists of Carinthia, are outraged by the disgrace that German authorities have once again brought upon themselves by continuing to deny our beloved Führer his freedom, contrary to solemnly given assurances.
We ask to be permitted to assure you of the unwavering loyalty of your Carinthians, who now—in defiance of all the forces that have allied themselves against you—will neither rest nor cease until the southernmost region of our German fatherland has become a bulwark of the German freedom movement. The enemies may hold our beloved Führer's body captive for now, but his spirit is free and lives on in the millions who, with quiet determination, are preparing until the chains are broken and the sun of freedom rises over a liberated fatherland.

In German loyalty,
the National Socialists of Carinthia

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Gera, October 17th, 1924

Dedicated with grateful reverence to the great leader of the German freedom movement, Adolf Hitler, by the author Heinz Wohlleben, Gera, Sorge II:

Heil Hitler!
Let them lock away our leaders and heroes,
within the fortress's gloomy walls,
for we know the turning of the ages,
and we see grinning enemies lying in wait.
Hitler, today we give you anew,
the Germanic word, Germanic loyalty!

You who dare, you figures of mourning,
to sit in judgment on the hero,
think of the national storm of forces,
know that one day our swords will flash!
To you, Adolf Hitler, let it be promised anew:
a curse upon him who has broken his word.

You who dare to pass judgment
on Tannenberg's victor and savior,
remember, there lives a youth ready to avenge
disgrace and betrayal, the seed of false gods.
Hitler, a longing lives within us all,
To fight with you, to fall with you.

You may once have mocked and laughed
at that handful of loyal followers,

But today we stand as an iron force,
that fears neither death nor the devil.
Hitler, this is your German deed.
And the "German" thanks: the black betrayal.

Hitler, you shall be our Führer
in the coming German era:
we'll smash the bars of the dungeon,
we're ready for anything.
Hitler, we'll hold fast until death
To the black-white-red swastika banner.

To you, who are still men,
whose eyes sparkle with courage,
raise your hand in a sacred oath:
A second Battle of Leipzig is coming.
Hitler, that is our ultimate goal:
Greater Germany stands, and the traitorous state has fallen.

You, Germany's youth, Germany's heirs,
return to the Aryan race.
Destruction to the Star of David,
good fortune to the swastika.
Heil Hitler, we salute with the German salute
our high traitor from the Isar River.

Note from the Prison Administration:
I. Objected to and withheld due to its violent, threatening content.
II. To be delivered to the fortress prisoner Hitler.

October 25th, 1924
Signed: Leybold

Delivered:
Landsberg, October 25th, 1924
Signed: Lohrer, Assistant Judge

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Transcript of an article from the magazine *Bidi*, published in Sweden; the editor sent it to Adolf Hitler in the fortress:

The Hitler Trial

Meanwhile, in Munich, the Hitler trial is unfolding and is being followed with bated breath throughout Germany.

Although the "Freedom Putsch" of November 8th and 9th ended in defeat—itself the result of the most shameful betrayal the world has ever known—it now seems as if the tide is turning, and that defeat is set to be transformed into a victory for the freedom fighters.
The unheard-of meanness, deceit, and unscrupulousness of the dishonorable Judas Iscariot trio—Kahr, Lossow, and Seißer—have been laid bare and exposed, so that these traitors now stand before the whole world as "worthy" accomplices and successors to Kurt Eisner.
They stand there as oath-breakers and wicked evildoers, as scheming slanderers, as cowardly mass murderers - yes, even the horrific deeds and high treason of a Kurt Eisner pale in comparison and are overshadowed by the terrible crimes of these three men against their people, their fatherland, and their nation.
Kurt Eisner was a—Jew! He may have shamefully betrayed the people who had shown him hospitality, but—that is Jewish; in contrast, Kahr, Lossow, and Seißer are German "men": what, then, can possibly defend their Judas Iscariot-like deeds? Nothing! Absolutely nothing!
Generations will rise and fall, and centuries will dawn and fade away, but as long as a German tongue speaks—indeed, as long as our earth still harbors a single German, or even Germanic, tribe—these three names will be spoken of only with the utmost loathing, contempt, and horror.

During the negotiations in Munich, the roles have been completely reversed: Hitler no longer sits in the dock, but stands there as the plaintiff—indeed, as the judge.
Through his generously conceived and crafted "defense speech," Hitler has, piece by piece, completely torn apart the artful, dense web of disgusting lies and slander with which attempts had been made to obscure his goals and deeds, and now, like a mighty spring storm, the German Nationalist Freedom Movement is sweeping through all German regions.
His speech was a masterful display of power and logical acuity, and his words fell with devastating force upon the men of the Jewish revolution: with tremendous impact, he hurled his accusations like thunder against the Jewish-bought demagogues of "Penitent Germany", and with the most ruthless disregard, he exposed the diabolical web of intrigue that has now brought Germany to the brink of the abyss.
Hitler's words resounded powerfully throughout the country and found an echo in the hearts of the German people - thus, it did no good that the all-powerful Jewish press, foaming with rage, sought to downplay, suppress, distort, and mock the content of Hitler's "defense speech", for what Hitler said before the court in Munich spread like wildfire from palace to cottage.
But let no one be under any illusion: the truth will ultimately prevail.

The original letter bears the following note from the prison administration:

Rejected due to gross insults and outbursts against Messrs. Kahr, Lossow, and Seißer.

Hitler opened it on April 10th, 1924.

Hitler's Fellow Inmates

The inmates of the fortress came from all walks of life, and there were many fine characters among them.

First and foremost was Kriebel, the quintessential battle-hardened front-line officer: most recently a Generalstäbler[6] during the war, he had taken part in the China campaign as a lieutenant in his younger years.
Numerous medals adorned his chest, and he was a rough but good-natured soldier, with a habit of always—under the supervision of the duty officer of course—violently tearing open the ties on the packages sent to him, even if they were made of rope, rather than cutting them, for in this way it seemed to him the best way to express his anger at his imprisonment without offending the prison administration.
Even when he wore his leather pants—worn down to a paper-thin minimum in certain places and shimmering in every color—with the wide Andreas Hofer belt[7] fitted with a huge buckle, his upright bearing made him recognizable as an officer from a distance.
Although, as a veteran soldier, he was accustomed to doing without, he nevertheless greatly appreciated a decent breakfast.
His bed, which he made himself every day—even though, as a prisoner of the fortress, he was under no obligation to do so—always looked as smooth as a planed board; a rich collection of books, mainly on military science, was also characteristic of this decisive man of action.

Dr. Weber, Kriebel's cellmate, was different.
A veterinarian by profession, leader of the Oberland Freikorps, and a veteran of the Upper Silesian campaign decorated with the E. K. I. medal[8], he had the demeanor of a brooding scholar; this impression was further reinforced by a pair of large glasses and the fact that, with the most meticulous precision, he knew how to explain the great and small phenomena of nature.
Unlike Kriebel, he did not tear open the string on the packages he received, but instead sought, with downright admirable patience, to untie the usually strangely tangled Gordian knot - unfortunately, it remains undecided to this day whose patience was greater: that of Dr. Weber or that of the sergeant standing by.
He was particularly fascinated by the stars, and he was even allowed once, at night, to explain a lunar eclipse to his friends Hitler and Kriebel.
Slender, wiry, and naturally athletic, Dr. Weber took on the role of physical education instructor among his fellow prisoners, and under his guidance, the fortress prisoners even held a small, very well-organized gymnastics festival once, to which—a sign of the good relationship between the prisoners and the prison administration—all the senior prison officials were invited and actually attended.
The winner, Rudolf Hess, received as a prize a specially printed, beautifully designed plaque, which still adorns his bookshelf today.

The aforementioned student Rudolf Hess was also among the inmates on the first floor, who had been given the telling nickname "The Generals" by their fellow prisoners housed on the other floors.

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[6] German for "general staff officer". - The Translator
[7] A style of belt made famous by a Tyrolean folk hero, Andreas Hofer, during the Napoleonic Wars. - The Translator
[8] The Iron Cross 1st Class. - The Translator

Tall and slender, with a finely chiseled, intelligent face, his modest manner and unobtrusive politeness made a captivating impression on everyone.
A former flight officer, he devoted himself primarily to scholarly work: meticulous order always reigned in his room, where he spent most of his time poring over books.
Hess, who was born in Egypt, where his parents had owned a large trading firm before the war—which fell into British hands as a result of the peace treaty—received repeated visits from his personal friend, General Haushofer, and since the conversations they had usually revolved around ethnology—University Professor Haushofer is one of the foremost experts on East Asia—monitoring these visits was also a pleasant experience for the guard.
Later on, Hess took on the role of Hitler's secretary.

The handyman on the first floor was the fortress prisoner Emil Maurice.
Skilled with a pen and otherwise familiar with all manner of tasks, he initially handled Adolf Hitler's written correspondence and saw to the procurement of the small necessities of daily life, which are also required even in a fortress, such as milk, flour, eggs, etc.; he also assumed the role of provisions manager.
Since a small stove had been installed in the corner of the entryway, he occasionally ventured into the role of a cook: what emerged from his culinary genius remained a secret known only to "The Generals", but burnt pots, traces of an unidentifiable substance on the stovetop, and suspicious splatters on the wall were the only bits of evidence that revealed that "cooking" had once taken place here.
Maurice had a penchant for romance, and in his adoration of a head of black curls—whose owner could gaze into the fortress garden from, admittedly, unapproachable distances—he seemed to have found an ideal.

In the smallest room, No. 1, lived a man who, had he been on this planet 300 years earlier, would surely have wielded a long rapier as a cornet in a Swedish cavalry squadron: Lieutenant Heines.
Tall, gaunt, and blond, he was animated by a wild, daring spirit, determined to do anything for his revered Führer, Hitler - however, despite all this, or perhaps because of his loyalty, he made an honest effort to observe the house rules—which Hitler had always insisted upon—no matter how difficult it sometimes was for him.
When his lively nature did not keep him occupied elsewhere, he was the driving force of the ground floor, and as a native of Munich, he also hated with all his heart, in particular, the clause in the house rules that limited consumption to just 1/2 liter of beer per day.

Room No. 2 housed the athletically built tailor: as an amateur boxer, he spent many hours of the day training his muscles, only to then lie motionless on his bed to regain his strength.
At his request, the prison administration had provided him with a so-called punching bag—an old sack filled with sand that dangled from a rope; since he was later joined by another lover of the art of boxing, the merchant Hoff, quite interesting bouts were often fought.

The raw strength of these two prisoners was counterbalanced, however, by the noble art of music, for under the direction of Post Secretary Reichhart, a small ensemble had formed, which, in accordance with the house rules, gave its concerts with the windows closed.
Various fortress prisoners owned instruments; for example, the municipal administrative assistant Karl Fiehler owned a lute, and several prisoners, including the Cologne student Hewel, owned a violin.

Realizing that the orchestra's lineup was still too small, the fortress prisoner Fröschl—drawing on his wealth of experience from the Schützengraben[9]—crafted primitive but "melodious" instruments from empty tin cans and strips of wood.
A harmonica and a jaw harp rounded out the ensemble; Master Reichhart wielded the baton, and the "Fridericus Rex" march resounded through the rooms.

His name was Fobke: he was from the North German port city of Stettin, and as a law student, he arrived at the fortress equipped with a stack of law books, though his natural sense of humor left him little time to digest the legal provisions: devising clever but always harmless pranks kept him very busy.
He was likely also the editor of the newspaper Der Landsberger Ehrenbürger (*The Landsberg Freeman*), which circulated among the fortress prisoners under the pseudonym "Fix u. Fax"[10]: written in the style of a student pub newspaper, it recorded all sorts of amusing incidents in the fortress—in the form of ballads, short stories, and poems—in a harmless and humorous manner.
The military spirit of the fortress prisoners—most of whom had seen combat—was expressed in a special War Edition that recounted experiences from the front; the newspaper, which was usually read aloud on Saturday evenings, also always provoked the greatest merriment.
It was usually produced during the night, and the prison administration knew nothing of its publication, as it was considered a "forbidden undertaking": it was only years later that I learned from Pg. Fiehler about the "black press" that existed in the fortress at that time.

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Below are some excerpts from the fortress newspaper:

The Landsberg Freeman:
Official Journal of the National Socialist Fortress Group, Landsberg am Lech

1st Year, 6th Part
War Memorial Number

Responsible for overall content: "Fix" and "Fax"
Editorial staff and publisher: Cell No. 11

"Heldendank" [Thanksgiving]

They went into the field, wreathed with flowers.

[9] The German name for trenches during the First World War. - The Translator
[10] According to the book *With Adolf Hitler in Landsberg Fortress* by Hans Kallenbach, Hermann Fobke was responsible for editing the "first, partly serious, partly ironic-humorous section" under "Fix", while the the "second, more satirical-humorous part" was done by Hans Kallenbach under "Fax".
According to the same text, the following were responsible for other parts of the newspaper: Joseph Gerum as publishing director, Paul Hirschberg writing for the feuilleton, theater and art criticism section, Adolf Hitler primarily as an illustrator and caricaturist, Edmund Schneider as editor for the advertising section, and other parts filled by fellow prisoners as part of the staff.
Finally, according to Kallenbach, almost all copies of *The Landsberg Freeman* were burned near the end of their imprisonment by the prisoners due to prison censors finding out about its distribution through the letter of one of the prisoners; the War Edition is the only copy to survive. - The Translator

How the old songs lament!
One Germany was against the whole world,
and the whole world could not bring it down.

For four years we held out gloriously
and would have held out even longer,
until the torch of discord flew into the house,
ignited by treacherous forces.

And they went homeward, wounded and torn,
their able limbs shot to pieces,
and found their homeland torn apart, incited,
for whom they had shed their blood.

They returned home – not adorned with flowers
no, adorned with bloody bandages,
and many a tear was angrily crushed
in a silent reunion.

No song and no thanks, the army broken,
The courage and hope was gone.
Oh, so many were now silent
who once set out singing.

Oh, you, my German fatherland,
betrayed, sold and forgotten,
do not forget the heroes in field-gray garb
and what they did for you.

Do not forget the faithful dead.
They died the death of the free,
and demand from us as a debt of gratitude
that we take care of their heritage.

That shall be the gratitude of the living
an outstanding mark in the country,
The dead remind day in and day out:
Remember the German shame!

And where a German grave was created,
be it in France, in Russia, in Poland,
there lies your loyalty, you German land.
When will you retrieve it?

- F.W. Hausmann

Our Dead

Do you remember what happened ten years ago?

For days and nights the trains rolled to the west and to the east, and they carried the most sacred of German goods –German men, marching towards the enemy.
Flags fluttered around them, songs were sung - and tears followed them...
But they did not heed the tears, for, laughing, they threw themselves towards death and fastened victory to the bullet-torn banners: it was as if, in the storm that swept over the battlefields, Germany was to fulfill its mission in the world.

Un-German rags have destroyed this mission, and disgraced the sacrificial death of two million German soldiers who died in this belief, in this mission of their people.

The silent heroes of the World War are the champions of the National Socialist movement, for we nationalists also want what they wanted: the freedom and greatness of our nation; that is why the dead German soldiers are sacred to us.

The fight in which they fell is not yet over, and we, the people, continue to fight it.
Many more souls have been laid to rest in the fatherland, accompanying the lonely hills of distant battlefields all over the world - there slumber those who helped to fulfill the legacy of their dead comrades.
Those who were killed by a German bullet, the dead of Munich, also belong to the silent gray army that prepared the way for us.

We want to finish the construction that they began with blood and iron, the construction of a free, national Germany: that shall be our homage to heroes.

- –FB–

My Mobilization

Metz – July 31st, 1914: a state of war has been declared on the fortress; the gymnasium is closing its doors, and the German-feeling[11] part of the first class is marching to the district command.
Among them is my friend and neighbor Robert Frantz: we have been gripped by war volunteer fever, and after much back and forth, we are both found to be suitable for light cavalry or train.
We choose cavalry; train is too ordinary for us, because we know the saying: “Victory or death, we carry bread!”[12]

With the fitness test done and the order to report to Diedenhofen the next day with written parental consent for transport to the Hussar Regiment there, we hurry home.
At home, great excitement: a family council! The old lady weeps, grandmother threatens to disinherit me, and the old gentleman decides: crazy idea, impossible, much too young.
I race, rage, weep, swear - but it's all in vain!
Then I went to my friend Robert to complain to him, but at his house, exactly the same thing happens, only accompanied by a few fatherly slaps in the face.
Deepest indignation: we deliberate!
Hurray, we have come up with a plan - but it requires money; Robert has an idea and, under the seal of the deepest secrecy, borrows a full twenty marks from the parental kitchen fairy[13].

[11] “Deutschfühlende”, a nationalist term. - The Translator
[12] A motto used by the German soldiers assigned to the trains. - The Translator
[13] Colloquial phrase for a female chef. - The Translator

The next morning, we disappear from home very early, saying that we want to see the warlike operations in town; then, armed with toothbrushes and a few well-hidden little items, we meet at the train station. And just like that, we are whizzing towards Diedenhofen on the express train, where a former maid from Robert's parents' house is married to a railroad worker there.
The couple is initiated into our secret and, at the same evening, we are already cheerful recruits in the barracks of the Royal Prussian Hussar Regiment King Umberto of Italy, No. 13.
They took us without a declaration of consent: we just thought we had won the game.

Three days later, we were being initiated into the secrets of grooming horses in the stables when suddenly, the non-commissioned officer on duty appears and shouts through the premises: "War volunteers Kallenbach and Frantz, to the captain immediately!"
Unsuspecting, we trot to the squadron office, and as Robert Frantz throws open the door and stands at attention, I am seized by a great horror and the whole misery of humanity falls upon me, for I recognized the infantry captain standing next to the cavalry captain as my old father: oh, good heavens, now help us.

The end result: we trudge as simple civilians with an awful guilty conscience next to the old gentleman to the train station, and an hour later we are back home.
Everything had been in vain! At least that's how it seemed to us.
A three-day lecture, along with all the accompanying symptoms; for three days I then played the deadbeat, refused all food, and had suicidal thoughts.
Finally, the ice was broken and my old man told me that, according to the facts of the case, I could not be held to it anyway, and so my wish to become an officer should come true - but according to tradition, I was to join a rifle battalion, and I was very happy when, eight days later, I landed as a Fahnenjunker at the Rhenish Rifle Battalion 8 in Schlettstadt in Alsace.
My friend Robert, who unfortunately remains in the Argonne, also got his way and joined the Metz Engineers.

It was only much later that my father told me that if it hadn't been for our escape, our parents would not have let us join up so quickly, and so I am still happy today that we came up with this adventurous idea back then.

- Hans Kallenbach

What Did I Step In?

A dense forest - we are on the front line, and dark night envelops everything in impenetrable blackness: I rush, suspecting nothing good, with the usual evening report to the rear to the KTK[14].
It is quiet as a mouse all around me, and only now and then the bang of a rifle shot or that of a flare rocket sounds in my ear.
Then, suddenly, distant shots fly towards me in rapid succession: howling and whistling, these strange birds come flying, crashing and splintering; the French greetings fall all around me.
The air has become uncomfortably iron-rich, and sap, wood chips and shrapnel whiz through the terrain: quick cover is my only thought.
I run for my life, bumping into trees and roots, falling and getting up again, and death is getting closer and closer.
Finally, I saw a part of the trench, and with a sigh of relief, I jumped in hastily: but what is this?
I'm as shocked as if I'd been bitten by a tarantula! I had thrown myself into a foul-smelling latrine pit in the darkness.

[14] "Kampf-Truppen-Kommandeur, responsible for troop movements. - The Translator

No need for comment: I will hate the French for the rest of my days.

- Alois Rosenwink

The Attack on the Regimental Band

As a pilot, I was stationed at Rorroy le Sec with the flight park to which I belonged; it was a bright sunny day, and I was off duty.
My brother-in-law, who has a considerable supply of wine and schnapps, was billeted in neighboring Spinkourt: how about I visit him and refresh the family ties! No sooner thought than done, for half an hour later, I was racing towards Spinkourt with my trusty NSU vehicle[15].

There, in the middle of the market square, the regimental band was playing, surrounded by a large crowd of male and female spectators: my heart leaped in my chest in anticipation of the pleasures to come, and lo and behold, over there stood my beloved brother-in-law.
I wave to him with my hands, and I squeal with delight; my NSU, meanwhile, rattles merrily along.
Then, suddenly, there is shouting and screaming all around me, the band stops playing with an unmelodious flourish, and as I come to my senses, I find myself in the middle of a crowd of people running in all directions, swearing and cursing: in the joy of my heart, I had ridden into the middle of the regimental band, which, together with the audience, was scattered to the four winds under my impetuous attack; now I was the sole ruler of the market square.

Then my brother-in-law approached me, quickly jumped on the motorcycle behind me, and in a rapid drive we left the scene of my heroic deed, chased by the fear of an avenging Nemesis: it was only in my brother-in-law's hospitable halls that I recovered from the surprise after enjoying numerous cognacs.
On the return journey, I took a wide berth around the place and thanked the merciful fate that this, my only independent undertaking, remained without further consequences.

- Berthold Fischer

Before Verdun!

For months now,
the battle has raged in the semicircle around Verdun.
and along the entire front, a wild drumfire rages,
or rather,
it howls like an unearthly hurricane,
in which a single blow can hardly be heard.

East of Douaumont and north of Thiaumont,
the First Battalion of the First Regiment
is already being deployed for the second time
in this terrible struggle.

It's night as is black as pitch,

[15] NSU was a vehicle manufacturer from 1873 to 1969, when it was acquired by Volkswagen AG and became a part of Audi AG. - The Translator

and cold rain pours down incessantly.
In their sunken, mud-filled trenches,
the hardened old fighters cower.
In between them are soft, milky-faced boys,
who, just a few days before,
adorned with flowers and singing,
marched through the streets of their hometown.

In the bright light of the flares,
the boys stare
distractedly at their comrades,
who are lying so eerily and motionless in the trench
and on the berm,
so waxy and pale,
with traces of blood on their scuffed, clay-yellow jackets.
The stench of decomposition,
pungent swaths of gas and ecrasite[16] shells,
sting the shivering figures.
One or the other sinks,
leaning on his friend,
despite the crashing shells,
into a deathly heavy sleep.

Many a brain is shot through
by the wild succession of images
of the day before yesterday:
the twenty-eight-year-old in the middle of the marching column,
the man who was blown to bits!
The piercing screams and the muffled groans
of this badly wounded comrade,
with whom one could not linger,
because duty called to move forward.

The Chauffour Gorge, the gorge of the dead
with its thousands of ghostly figures,
lying, sitting, kneeling,
leaning against trees,
waiting for the day when they
will find peace in the ground.
For no one dare
show them their last love,
without soon sharing their fate,
in the hellfire of these hellish canyons…

Now dawn is breaking.
The men stir
and stretch their weary bones.

The old keep a sharper watch,

[16] An explosive material. - The Translator

And in the first light of dawn, they recognize
the honeycomb trenches in front of them,
the target of the charge in just a few hours.
On the horizon,
the armored turrets of Fort Thiaumont rise up against the red sky.

Through all the whistling, booming, crashing
of the bombardment on both sides,
the very thickest, heaviest chunks howl into the fort:
thunderclaps echo,
and the earth seems to heave,
as one black trail of smoke after another rises sky-high.

With shining eyes,
the men in the trench
see this spectacle,
and new strength flows into them.
"Hey, Frenchman, that's a nasty morning greeting!
You there must die so that we can live,
we and all our poor people."

Then there is a new creeping and groaning in the air,
and hair-raising over drawn-in heads,
as one twenty-one year old snarls at the enemy trenches.
With a hellish crash, stones, beams
and human bodies whirl through the air.
It is the drumbeat of the assault that now begins.
The answer comes from the other side – not bad!

Dust, smoke and a single wall of fire
surrounds the gray figures, waiting.
Now there is a flash in the trench itself:
the German volleys hit the middle of it!
"Too short - too short!"
The bright green rounds fly high -
in vain!

More and more volleys follow,
and more and more bodies twitch, hit hard.
Death, the great unknown,
keeps stamping up and down the trench.
Even his old acquaintances
feel their nerves on edge,
and with every new blow, his body cramps.

"Oh, better to charge – to storm on the spot –
than to wait any longer in this place of horror!
Let us go, let us go!" –
Then the order comes from behind:
"In order that our own guns
can ruthlessly cover the nearby enemy trench,

our first line is to be cleared immediately."

Two hundred meters behind it,
the battalion digs itself free in the terrain.
But at the front, from each company,
until the charge in twenty-four hours,
one squad leader and six men will remain,
who have to identify the crew.

As short and clear as the order,
so difficult it is for everyone who leads here,
for one thing is certain, come what may:
that those at the front will stay there,
while those in the trench have seen their graves.

Here the leader could show that he is a man;
he who leads by example could die here,
but he must not, for he must not sacrifice himself now.

"Volunteers, forward!" –
And after a brief hesitation,
an old man here and a young lad there
volunteered, until the group was complete:
they all knew that they were volunteering
to certain death.

They stared into the distance, their features
stiff, their teeth gritting.
Perhaps one of them thought of home,
of his forests, his mountains;
perhaps he sent a last greeting
to his sweetheart.

They step forward, not in the intoxication of yore,
for the intoxication is long gone:
Now they only sacrifice themselves – soldiers for their homeland.

The next morning, the charge was a proud victory march,
while the best were found dead at the front of the trench.

Now consider, just like these,
that there were many, many thousands of others
in the German army
who, unknown and unnamed,
died as silent heroes.
Remember them today,
after ten years since the mighty struggle
of the best army in the world had begun.

Remember these heroes of our army,
who were greater heroes than many,

whose name, song and stone from ancient times have been told.

Shall their death be in vain?
"No!"
And act on the "No", day in, and day out!
As your thanks to them.

- Rudolf Hess

A Few Days of Fighting by Parts of the Alpenkorps, the Royal Bavarian Life Guards and the 1st Jäger Battalion at the Somme, Southwest of Epehy - Fall 1918

On one of the first days of September – it was an afternoon – a sweltering heat prevailed over the entire torn terrain in front of our position.
Nowhere was a grove of trees or a picture of life on which the eye could rest, but only a single funneled field, churned up earth, remains of trenches, all together a grandiose, gruesome wasteland.

I was lying in an advanced position with my company; we were flanked by the 11th Company on the left and the Jägerns on the right.
An eerie, ominous silence lay over us - then came a flash, and at 4 o'clock, the whole line suddenly came to life.
Enemy planes circled above our position, and gradually, artillery fire began and quickly increased in intensity; it intensified from salvo to salvo, ultimately to a drumfire.
Mechanically, we jumped forward one by one, a little further each time, in order to get out of the barrage that the enemy had placed between us and the rear lines.
The hail of iron that lasted perhaps half an hour – an eternity for us – was only slightly disturbed by our artillery.

Suddenly the enemy opened fire on the rear lines, the German front lines, probably because he thought they were finished.
Several tanks advanced in dense columns, followed by masses of infantry, to our amazement: now we received help.
An infantry support battery rattled towards us at a furious pace, set up, and, after a short time, two tanks were finished off with well-placed shots; some of the monsters still broke through our position, but were dealt with at the back.
Meanwhile, the enemy infantry had advanced to within 50 meters of us, suffering huge losses in individual groups; they were then completely wiped out by our brave machine gunners, and the pitiful remnants fled in haste.
Some of the Tommy soldiers remained in our hands as prisoners and were tasked with bringing our wounded to safety: the attack was repulsed.

- Wilhelm Briemann

Retrospective

Do you remember, comrade?
A long box,
drab, with two flagpoles on it;
a heavy, iron-clad gate,

and a German soldier in front of it, with his helmet;
sharp commands in the distance,
the complete picture: our barracks!

Inside, in those bare rooms,
were tough men, young virgins,
quiet submission, dull rumbling,
flaming ambition, and stormy wills -
whether Bavarian or Prussian, whether rich or poor,
the Kaiser's coat makes them all equal!

And we, comrade, were there too!
Do you remember? Slow step - one - two -
grinding, flogging and re-exercising,
shifting posts, greasing trouser boots:
but it was still beautiful, this soldiering!

Of course, there were also many hard things:
when the helmet, the rifle and the gun weighed heavily;
when your knees buckled at every step,
your tongue stuck to the roof of your mouth,
when every thought was of home.
Then, later in the field, in the dirt and in need,
so far from life, and so close to death…

But when on the march it sounded out of the ranks
and leaped jubilantly into minds and hearts,
a song of home, of love, of pain -
then we were glad to be there.

But now the great experience is over...
And only sometimes, when the hands rest idle,
the soul still marches in step, in step,
and a soldier's song sounds softly along…

But one thing, comrade, that time has given us,
the one lesson for life:
just as we, as men in gray field dress,
were willing to sacrifice the last,
when we were always at the front line,
so be it in the days to come:
where we stand, there we stand,
in the fight of life, a German soldier!

- H.F.

***

Fobke, a prisoner of the fortress, shared Room No. 11 with three others - the notice affixed to the door below demonstrated just how much the inmates valued order:

1. If you are accepted into the fellowship of a cell, always show consideration for your comrades, because consideration is part of decency and decency is part of childhood.
2. Do not throw your cigar, cigarette, or pipe ash on the floor or on the table or in the flower pots: this is neither a mass accommodation nor an inn.
3. Don't hang your clothes on chairs or beds, but in the closet: that's what you have a closet for.
4. Don't smear the tablecloth with dirt: this is not a coachman's tavern.
5. Don't shout pointlessly, but speak properly and don't interrupt your comrades: this is not a Jewish school.
6. If you want to sing along in the chorus or otherwise make a fuss of yourself, go to the common room that is available for this purpose: this is not a concert hall.
7. If you want to wrestle, box or do any other kind of weight training, go out into the hallway: this is not a gym.
8. Be considerate of your fellow comrades and help to ensure that there is general silence in the cell from 12 noon to 2 PM: this is part of the cosiness.
9. From 9 PM onwards, please refrain from any noisy activity, and do not disturb your fellow comrades who are writing letters, reading or sleeping: this is part of decency.
10. If you still want to read after 9 o'clock, dim your lights, avoid loud conversation, do not clatter with the typewriter or with wooden slippers through the area, and do not slam doors and windows: you are not in a nightclub.

***

Room 10 was occupied by the merchant Friedrich Geißelbrecht, the city administrative assistant Karl Fiehler, and Reserve Lieutenant Hager.
The latter, bespectacled and at first glance seemingly unremarkable, could display a forceful demeanor when it came to asserting his opinion, and his strict discipline and punctuality in all matters revealed him to be a seasoned soldier, even without having seen his military papers; as a native of Munich however, he was also always up for a good joke and a bit of humor.

A terribly gag-inducing pipe, in which he smoked an even more foul-smelling tobacco, comes to mind when recalling Julius Schaub, who worked as a clerk.

The other prisoners of the fortress were less conspicuous, yet their presence helped keep life and activity within the fortress in a constant state of turmoil.
Those not yet mentioned, who at that time shared the fate of fortress imprisonment with Hitler, were:

- Wagner, Robert, a retired lieutenant from Lindach in Baden;
- Hauenstein, Karl, merchant from Moritzreuth;
- Rosenwink, Alois, a commercial clerk from Munich;
- Steinbinder, Michael, a valet from Munich;
- Fischer, Berthold, an actor from Munich;
- Gerum, Josef, a detective’s assistant from Munich;
- Hirschberg, Paul, a store clerk from Munich;
- Hauck, Johann, a waiter, from Pressburg;
- Kallenbach, Hans, technician from Munich;
- Hamm, Emil, state police sergeant from Unterbiberg;
- v. Prosch, Gerhard, retired first lieutenant from Oberschlund in Saxony;
- Briemann, Wilhelm, merchant from Munich;
- Hutter, Karl, butcher from Bluibach;
- Heiden, Erhard, merchant from Munich;
- Geiselbrecht, Friedrich, merchant from Nuremberg;
- Knörrlein, Wilhelm, merchant from Regensburg;
- Danneberg, Emil, merchant from Halle an der Saale;
- Maures, Johann Georg, writer from Jettenbach am Inn;
- Hewel, Walter, student from Cologne;

- Krüger, Hans Eduard, student from Cologne;
- Feichtmayr, Josef, tinsmith from Freising;
- Feichtmayr, Otto, tinsmith from Freising;
- Schmid, Ludwig, merchant from Munich;
- Laforce, Wilhelm, authorized signatory from Munich;
- Mahr, Johann, inspector from Mainroth;
- Schreck, Julius, merchant from Munich;
- von Knobloch, Heinrich, merchant from Königsberg;
- Schön, Johann, manufacturer from Munich.

Adolf Hitler

All the great and small minds who had been forced to gather in the fortress were overshadowed, however, by the figure of Adolf Hitler.

His daily routine was roughly as follows:
An early riser, he was usually fully dressed well before 7 a.m., the time at which the day officially began in the fortress.
He paid particular attention to his oral hygiene; this was necessitated by the aftereffects of the gas poisoning he had suffered during the war.
After breakfast with his fellow prisoners—during which he usually engaged in conversation about art and history—Hitler would typically retire to his room, which had since been furnished by prison inmates, and immerse himself in the study of political, scientific, and literary works: he had at his disposal an extensive library containing the finest books, mostly gifts from friends and admirers - over the course of his imprisonment, his library had grown considerably and occupied a large part of his cell, which was decorated with pretty pictures and flowers.
Hitler is a great admirer of Richard Wagner and Frederick the Great - thus, he holds the works and portraits of both in high esteem in his room.
This was followed by a more or less brief walk in the fortress garden, during which Hitler conversed with his friends about political prospects, watched his fellow prisoners' calisthenics, or inspected the progress of the landscaping; at times, he would also sit in the sun reading a book.
Often, a small circle of people would gather around him, with whom he conversed animatedly in his friendly manner; especially during the early days of his imprisonment, these walks were usually interrupted by the many visitors, who often lingered until noon and beyond.
Lunch then brought Hitler back together with his loyal followers for a longer get-together in the day room: this room had taken on a pleasant appearance thanks to the addition of a clock and framed art prints, though the bars on the windows served as a reminder that the occupants were still in a prison cell.
The mail brought letters and packages, and the contents of the newspaper—which everyone always awaited with great anticipation—were discussed, which regularly led to lively debates; Hitler would then retire to his room to respond to the numerous letters he had received or to study.
The afternoon, which was often taken up by visits, found him strolling in the fortress garden, and after supper, he enjoyed watching the ball game organized by his fellow prisoners in front of the fortress building: his hearty laughter at the players, who were tumbling over one another in their overheated zeal, and at the figures that occasionally looked quite comical, always had a contagious effect on all the participants.
Once the game was over, the fortress prisoners gathered at their Führer's quarters for a brief chat and to discuss all manner of matters.
At 10 p.m., the day rooms were locked and the lights were extinguished - thus, the prisoners retired to their quarters, and Hitler used the ensuing quiet for undisturbed study, writing, or reading.
At midnight, after the lights had been turned off, the fortress lay in utter darkness, and only the marching to and from their posts of the sentries and their brief shouts pierced the creeping night.

Adolf Hitler's physically clean demeanor, devoid of any obtrusive vanity—which always lends men a feminine trait—combined with a great love of order, made an authoritative impression on those around him, an impression that was significantly enhanced by his open, straightforward character.
Hitler seemed to possess a powerful source of energy that, despite the good-naturedness evident in every aspect of his being, could burst forth like a sweeping torrent in moments of decision.
It is clear that in a group of people living in close community—cut off from the outside world, constrained on all sides by regulations, and, moreover, convinced that they had intended only good through their now-punished actions—sparks can easily fly which, if skillfully kindled, can lead to constant friction with the institution's administration; however, the spirit of military discipline and obedience that radiated from Hitler's personality captivated his fellow inmates and taught them to endure their fate, just like their Führer did, with the courage befitting a fighter for an idea centered on the will to freedom.
Always maintaining a consistent courtesy toward everyone, high or low, including the institution's officials—whose service Hitler appreciated—he secured their unreserved sympathy.
Modest in his demands and personal needs, Hitler was nevertheless able to take childlike joy in all those things that were given to him from the heart: he gave away most of the contents of the many care packages sent to him personally to his fellow prisoners, and the children of visitors also always received a small gift whenever he was able to provide one.

Loyal camaraderie—which knows no distinction of social class or education and which, especially in times of need, finds the best opportunity to prove itself a noble virtue—kept Adolf Hitler closely connected to the fate of his fellow prisoners, and the cultivation of this camaraderie had grown particularly dear to his heart.
He came to the aid of his comrades—who had often found themselves in dire personal circumstances due to their imprisonment—with advice, practical help, and financial support.
Endowed with a sunny sense of humor, yet a man who scorned vulgarity—which never crossed his lips—his laughter would repeatedly break through triumphantly when, on gloomy days, the mood had hit rock bottom.

It was always a celebration for his fellow prisoners when, on Saturday evenings, the Führer devoted himself entirely to them: already in the afternoon, after cleaning the fortress and receiving their fresh linens, a Sunday-like glow appeared on the inmates' faces.
They would then always gather in one of the common rooms to spend the evening with jokes, humor, and good gramophone music—Hitler loved Wagner's compositions above all else.
On such occasions, Hitler would also explain the intentions and goals of his struggle, and the singing of patriotic songs brought the convivial gathering to a close.

Cheerfulness always prevailed, though often—very often—gloomy days would come, as when the sun hid behind the clouds for days on end, the rain poured down ceaselessly outside, and the wind rattled the windows with invisible fingers, even the rooms of the fortress would fall into an eerie silence.
Deep lines of worry etched the Führer's face, and bad news would come from outside: Hitler's enterprise, built up over years of tenacious work and unspeakable sacrifices, seemed noticeably shaken.
Though the foundation was solid, the Movement—once so powerfully ignited—threatened to fizzle out, deprived of the Führer's strength; demonic forces, coming from the East and knowing that their greatest

and most dangerous enemy lay defenseless on the ground, also began to spread, ready to exert their all-destructive influence on the most vulnerable parts of the body of the people.
The few loyal followers were at a loss as to which path to take, and disputes within the individual groups—petty factional squabbles born of false ambition—endangered the Movement's healthy vitality, with feeble entities attempting to rise up and cloud the clear, upright gaze of the still-loyal followers.
One may well speak of a loyal following, but the all-pervading force is missing—the Führer is missing.

Sleepless nights set in, and the hours crawl by as if weighed down by lead: more clearly than ever, the alert ear hears the sound of the relieving sentries, who, in front of the small barracks, creak as they chamber the cartridges into their rifles.
Yet Hitler's unyielding will, with tremendous tenacity, overcame every rising wave of despondency: in the early days of his imprisonment, he had tried to provide guidelines to party comrades who sought his advice, but when he realized that his statements were being misunderstood and often published in a distorted form, he withdrew more and more from any political influence and devoted himself entirely to his writing.

It was during that time that he also began writing the first volume of his book *Mein Kampf*: day and night, the typewriter clattered, and one could hear him dictating to his friend Hess in the cramped room; he would then usually read the completed sections—mostly on those Saturday evenings—to his fellow sufferers, who sat around him like disciples, looking up at their Führer with enthusiasm, swept away by his oratory.
While working, Hitler tolerated no interruptions, and therefore, in later years, when he was in the midst of his most productive period, he strictly refused any visit that was not absolutely urgent: he remained entirely consistent in this attitude, and not even the alluring title on a princess's business card could make him waver.
Nevertheless, he laughed heartily when, one day, a torrential downpour forced its way through the poorly fitting windows of his room with such force that the water covered a large part of the floor: everyone rushed in with buckets and mops, while in the middle of the room sat the asylum cat, drinking deeply from this heavenly water - this peculiar sight reconciled Hitler with the weather gods once again.

Visits to Hitler

Visits, which were particularly frequent during the early part of Hitler's imprisonment, played a major role during his time in prison: not a day went by without a greater or lesser number of visitors being admitted.
All visits required the approval of the prison director, and since, according to prison regulations, Hitler was allowed only six hours of visiting time per week, visitors often had to make do with just a few minutes - nevertheless, this time was often insufficient and was extended by prison authorities in urgent cases.
The conversations took place in designated visiting rooms and were constantly monitored by an official; this procedure was deviated from only in special cases.

Visitors came from all parts of Germany—from the Alps to the North Sea coast, from the Saar River to the Polish border—some by train, some by car, and some by bicycle.
People of every social class and every age were represented: sturdy figures in leather pants and sturdy, nailed-down shoes mingled with dapperly dressed gentlemen from industry and the business world; clergy of both denominations; rural petty bourgeois, lawyers, former officers, professors, farmers, artists, unskilled laborers, nobles, booksellers, publishers, and editors—all arriving with often the strangest of requests.
As mentioned in an official report, petitioners, job seekers, and friends also came; curious onlookers showed up, as did businesspeople who wanted to exploit the völkisch movement and Hitler's name for their own gain; publishers interested in the book about Hitler attempted, sometimes successfully and sometimes not, to gain access to Hitler.
Many were turned away by the institution's management, with or without Hitler's consent.

Representatives of the völkisch press came to request assistance in financing their newspapers and to seek advice on the political line the editorial staff should follow; meanwhile, party politicians initially came for advice on tactics for preparing for and conducting the state parliament and, in particular, the Reichstag elections; then came those who had been nominated as candidates, and after the elections, elected völkisch representatives arrived.
Envoys came to seek Hitler's advice on how to resolve the numerous differences of opinion and disputes within the local, district, and regional groups in the völkisch camp, along with how to deal with the obsequiousness of appointed officials or overbearing party leaders.

Many visitors were turned away: hikers passing by on the country road, carrying backpacks and canteens, wanted to quickly greet Hitler, and curious onlookers who happened to have business in the city of Landsberg wanted to see him.
Even a second Adolf Hitler—a man who apparently was not quite normal—persistently sought to visit his brother Rudolf Hitler—also known as Adolf Hitler—in order to beg him for financial assistance.

Among those admitted to visit, women were strongly represented, and Hitler displayed toward women and girls the same winning courtesy he showed to everyone else.

It was precisely this purity underlying Hitler's entire natural being—which, despite all his amiability, never strayed into familiarity with the opposite sex—that earned him the admiration of women - thus, the search for an ideal figure was particularly evident among the female visitors.
Hitler's reunion with his sister, Mrs. Raubel from Vienna, was a warm one, bearing witness to deep sibling love.

Among the visitors, his most loyal friends stood out in particular: Alfred Rosenberg, District Administrator Frick, First Lieutenant Brückner, Attorney Rodner, Librarian Buttmann, Head Teacher Streicher, Editor Hermann Esser, Gottfried Feder, Captain Röhm, Max Amann, and Ulrich Graf - after all, they were the loyal stewards in whose hands the legacy of his unfinished work lay during Hitler's imprisonment.
General Ludendorff, who was still closely allied with Hitler at the time, also visited him frequently, and it was always a special occasion when the great field marshal, always accompanied by several gentlemen, strode through the fortress gate with his rigid, upright bearing.

During these visits, Hitler developed such eloquence that it was often difficult for the official supervising the visit to interrupt him when the visiting time was up; when this was finally achieved, Hitler would immediately end the conversation and take his leave.
Of course, it was not only Hitler, but also the other prisoners in the fortress who received visits from friends and relatives, though often they, too, had the opportunity to greet Hitler briefly.

The Hasty Ones

And so the months passed: summer faded away, and with it, from the fortress garden, many a bouquet of carnations with which this or that flower lover had adorned his room in the fortress.
Fall set in, and the leaves slowly began to turn brown; the nights had grown noticeably cooler, and Adolf Hitler still worked on his book with tireless zeal.
October 1st, 1924, was drawing near, and with it, his six months of imprisonment at the fortress would come to an end: the probationary period stipulated in the sentence was to begin on that day and open the gate to freedom for Hitler.

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As early as September, the following report was sent to the public prosecutor's office:

Administration of the Prison and the Landsberg a. L. Fortress Prison

Landsberg a. L., September 15th, 1924
To the First Public Prosecutor at the Munich I Regional Court
Re: Enforcement of Hitler's fortress imprisonment sentence; approval of a probationary period

At the request of the Public Prosecutor's Office at the Munich I Regional Court, I report the following:

Prisoner Hitler has been held at this fortress prison since April 1st, 1924—that is, for 5 1/2 months; by October 1st, 1924, he will have served 10 1/2 months.

Hitler has shown himself to be a man of order and discipline, not only with regard to himself but also toward his fellow inmates.
He is frugal, modest, and accommodating; he makes no demands, is calm and reasonable, serious and without any rudeness, and makes a painstaking effort to comply with the restrictions of the prison system. He is a man without personal vanity, is content with the prison meals, does not smoke or drink, and, despite his camaraderie toward his fellow inmates, knows how to maintain a certain authority.

As a bachelor who, even when free, makes no demands for a comfortable lifestyle, he bears the deprivation of liberty more easily than his married fellow inmates: he shows no interest in women, but he treats the women he encounters here during visits with the utmost courtesy, without engaging them in serious political discussions.
He always behaves politely toward the prison officials and never in an offensive manner.

Hitler, who initially received a great many visitors, has, as is well known, been keeping political visitors at a distance as much as possible for several months now; he now also writes very few letters, mostly just thank-you notes.
He spends many hours each day working on the draft of his book, which is scheduled to be published in the coming weeks, and his autobiography, which will contain reflections on the bourgeoisie, Judaism, and

Marxism; the German Revolution and Bolshevism; the National Socialist movement, and the events leading up to November 8th, 1923.
He expects the book to have a large print run and hopes to use the proceeds from its sale to meet his financial obligations, particularly those arising from criminal proceedings and the execution of his sentence.

Hitler will undoubtedly return to political life, and he will seek to rekindle the national movement in his own image, though no longer as before through violent means—directed against the government if necessary—but rather in coordination with the appropriate government agencies; he will also be travelling around the country and seek to organize the national movement.
During the ten months of pretrial detention and imprisonment, he has undoubtedly become more mature and composed than he was before: he will not return to freedom with threats or thoughts of revenge against the officials in the opposing camp who thwarted his plans in November 1923, and he will not be a subversive against the government, nor an enemy of other parties that are nationally minded; furthermore, he emphasizes how deeply convinced he is that a state cannot exist without firm internal order and a stable government.

Hitler is undoubtedly a versatile, politically independent thinker with extraordinary willpower and sound reasoning - thus, in light of all the observations made here, I have no hesitation in stating that, based on his overall conduct while in prison, Hitler has proven himself worthy of being granted a period of probation.
He is counting on the execution of his sentence being suspended on October 1st of this year, after the prospect of a probationary period—to be granted following the completion of six months of his sentence, calculated from April 1st, 1924—was raised by a decision of the sentencing court; furthermore, numerous letters addressed to Hitler express the expectation that he will be released on October 1st.

Signed,
Leybold

***

The public prosecutor's office filed an appeal with the Supreme Regional Court against the regional court's decision of September 25th, 1924, to grant Hitler a period of probation - thus, Hitler remained in custody.

The anniversary of November 8th was approaching, and for the inmates of the fortress, it was a day of a very special kind: once again, Hitler gathered with his loyal followers in the day room, and in deeply felt words, Adolf Hitler commemorated those who died at the Feldherrnhalle while, mindful of his great responsibility for the events of November 8th, also outlining the historical and inevitable course of those events.
Deeply moved, his fellow prisoners, who shared his fate, sensed the full moral greatness of their Führer - then November, too, came to an end.

***

Another report from the prison administration, dated December 14th, 1924 and addressed to the Supreme State Court, states:

"Hitler remains consistently the same: unassuming in his personal needs, selfless, and polite.
He has an upright, open character; he suppresses occasional bad moods and irritations, and he respects dutiful civil servants, even when they cannot please him.
Secrecy is foreign to him, and he maintains order and decorum among himself and his fellow inmates; he is a man of good self-discipline and self-control, adapts to adverse circumstances without objection or harsh criticism, and in this sense serves as a good role model for his fellow inmates.
Politically, he has become increasingly withdrawn during his incarceration, cutting himself off more and more from the outside world over the past months: he must be described as a political idealist.
When he takes the opportunity to explain political goals to his fellow inmates, he does so with restraint, without being pushy, and in a manner that bridges differences, using clear and appropriate language.
He has now served 13 months of his five-year prison sentence: based on his conduct in prison, he is particularly deserving of parole."

***

Meanwhile, Christmas is drawing near, and some of his fellow prisoners had already returned to freedom; those remaining watched the departing prisoners leave with wistful eyes, and Hitler endures the great disappointment with unshakable composure.

His friends are already preparing for Christmas, setting up tables for gifts and decorating the forecourt with green fir garlands; a large tree stands in the corner, spreading the resinous scent of the forest and awaiting its decorations.
The "Generals" are preparing to select gifts for their comrades when, at 10 a.m. on December 20th, 1924, the news bursts into the rooms like a bomb: Hitler is being released!
This news causes immense excitement among the fortress prisoners, but despite all the joy, saying goodbye is difficult, for Hitler had grown fond of the men who had loyally followed him even beyond the fortress walls.
Time is running out, and his belongings are hastily packed; already, the car is rattling at the main gate.
A heartfelt handshake is given, and from the windows, those left behind call out and wave a hearty "Heil!"
The gate of freedom opens: Adolf Hitler is free.

***

After Hitler's release, on January 5th, 1925, Higher Regional Court Judge Pöhner began serving his sentence: he was an energetic, upright German man whose outstanding qualities included the great courage he had demonstrated during the revolutionary period, his soldierly self-discipline, and his fervent enthusiasm for his fatherland and for Adolf Hitler - thus, he joined the ranks of the fortress prisoners.
He was released from the fortress on March 31st, 1925 - and died in a car accident just a few days after regaining his freedom.

From the Official Files

Arrest Warrant

In connection with the coup attempt on the night of the 8th to the 9th of this month, Adolf Hitler of Braunau, Upper Austria, is to be placed in protective custody until further notice.
The arrested person is to be transported to the Landsberg Detention Center.
The detainee was informed that he has the right to file a complaint with the Regional Court regarding the appointment of a defense attorney.
A copy of this protective custody order was handed to the detainee.

On behalf of the State Commissioner General Weilheim
November 11th, 1923

District Office:
Vaigt

Stamp

Bavarian District Office:
Weilheim

Case Reg. No. 20/24
Case No. XIX. 421/23
Court Clerk's Office of the People's Court of Munich I

Munich, January 25th, 1924

Re: Adolf Hitler et al., charged with high treason

A date has been set for the main hearing against the aforementioned defendant at the People's Court of Munich I on

Monday, February 18th, 1924, at 8:30 a.m.

Pursuant to a judicial order, I request that you arrange for the transfer of

Adolf Hitler, writer, born April 20th, 1889, in Braunau,

who is currently in pretrial detention at the Landsberg am Lech Prison, to the Munich-Neudeck Court Prison; at the same time, I request that the penal authority not named herein be notified of this request. The return of Adolf Hitler will be arranged without delay following the conclusion of the main trial at the Munich I People's Court.

The Court Clerk:
signed
Hecker, Secretary

To the Landsberg a. L. Prison

The Public Prosecutor at the Munich I Regional Court

Munich, February 21st, 1924

To Mr. Senior Government Councilor Leypold, Director of the Prison Landsberg

Attention

Re: Hitler et al. on charges of high treason

The bearers of this letter are instructed to transport the pretrial detainee Adolf Hitler by car to Stadelheim; I request that this transport be kept as secret as possible.

First Public Prosecutor
Signature: illegible

Ref. No. XIX. 421/23
People's Court of Munich I
Admission Order

Adolf Hitler, born April 20th, 1889, is to be held in custody following his current detention in order to serve his five-year sentence of imprisonment in a fortress for the crime of high treason.
Four months and two weeks of pretrial detention shall be credited toward the sentence.

Munich, April 1st, 1924, 10:00 a.m.

The Presiding Judge:
Signature: Neithard

Landsberg a. L. Prison
Land Registry No. 21

General Practitioner's Report on the Prisoner Hitler, Adolf

State of health and general physical condition: healthy, of average build.

Height: 175 cm.
Weight: 77 kg.
Information on hereditary predisposition and other details from the medical history: —
Indications of mental illness or psychopathic deficiency: —
Ability to work: Fit for work
Solitary confinement: Suitable
Special remarks: —

The prison physician:
Signed:
Dr. Brinsteiner

Judgment Book No. C 347 1/24.
The Public Prosecutor in Munich, April 12th, 1924.
Munich I Regional Court.

To the Administration of the Fortress Prison in Landsberg am Lech

Re: The enforcement of the sentence against Hitler, Adolf, for high treason

Admission Order

By judgment of the People's Court at the Munich I Regional Court, dated April 1st, 1924, the arrested Adolf Hitler, born April 20th, 1889, in Braunau (Upper Austria), a writer, was sentenced to five years' imprisonment in a fortress for the crime of high treason, with four months and two weeks of pretrial detention to be credited toward the sentence.
I have in my possession the certificate confirming the execution of the judgment, and I request that the convicted person, whose transfer to the penal institution I have arranged today, be admitted for the execution of his sentence and that I be notified of his admission.
The sentence is to be calculated from April 1st, 1924, at 10:05 a.m.
A copy of the judgment is enclosed.
Note: after serving an additional 6-month term of imprisonment, the convicted person was offered the prospect of probation for the remainder of the sentence.

K. E.
Signed:
Dunkers

Landsberg Fortress Prison
Landsberg, April 30th, 1924

I. Adolf Hitler, a prisoner at this fortress, is hereby notified that his imprisonment is recorded in the prison register as follows:

Sentence to be served: 5 years, 4 months and 2 weeks of imprisonment

Start of sentence: April 1st, 1924, at 10:05 a.m.

End of sentence: November 17th, 1928, at 10:05 a.m.

Partial end of sentence: October 1st, 1924, at 10:05 a.m.

Lt. U.
Signed:
Adolf Hitler

II. Entry in the register and in Calendar No. 21, and notification of the sentence calculation to St. A. Munich I.

Administration of the Landsberg am Lech Fortress Prison
Signed:
Leybold

Ref. No. C 347 1/24
The Public Prosecutor at the Munich I Regional Court

Munich, May 12th, 1924

To the Administration of the Fortress Prison in Landsberg am Lech

Re: The enforcement of the sentence against Adolf Hitler, writer, born April 20th, 1889

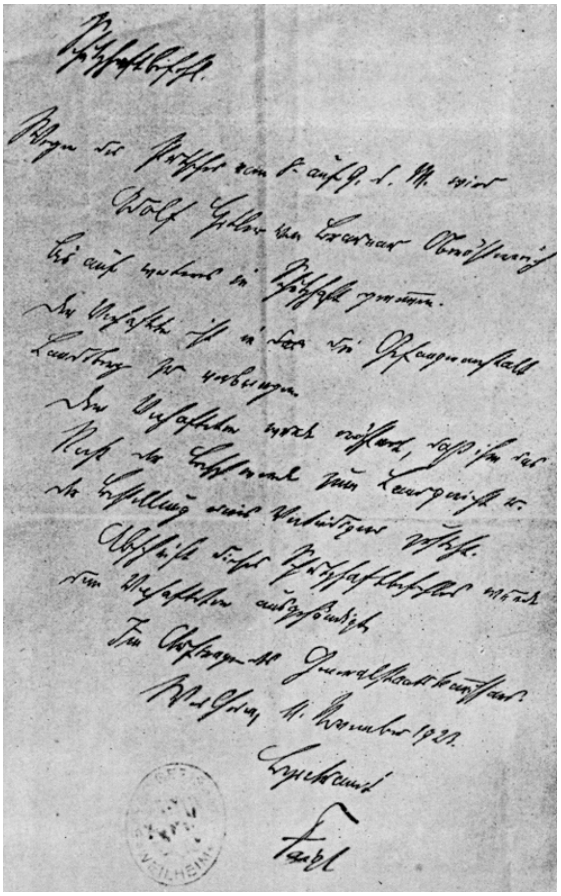
I do not agree with the scheduled end of the sentence on November 17th, 1928, at 10:05 a.m., as the actual end of the sentence is calculated to be November 18th, 1928, at 10:05 a.m.
I request a correction and corresponding notification to this office.
A partial end of the sentence is out of the question for the time being, as only a probationary period has been offered.

I. V.:
Dr. Mulsch

Photos

Picture 1: Hitler in his cell at the fortress

Picture 2: Landsberg am Lech Prison and Fortress Detention Center



Picture 3: Preventive Detention Order

Lichtbildausweis mitnehmen!

Vorweis.

Herr Matthäus Hofmann hat die

Erlaubnis, mit d[illegible] in der Strafgefängnisanstalt Landsberg

verhafteten Adolf Hitler

im Beisein ~~eines Gefängnisbeamten~~ ~~Minuten zu sprechen~~.

Herr Hofmann wünscht Hitler über

die diesen vorbestimmten Gesprächsstoff

20 Minuten zu sprechen. Der Gefängnisbeamte

bei Hitler wird die Besprechung mit

überwacht werden.

München, den 3 XII 1923

Der I. Staatsanwalt bei dem Landgerichte München I.

[illegible]

Besuchsstunden:

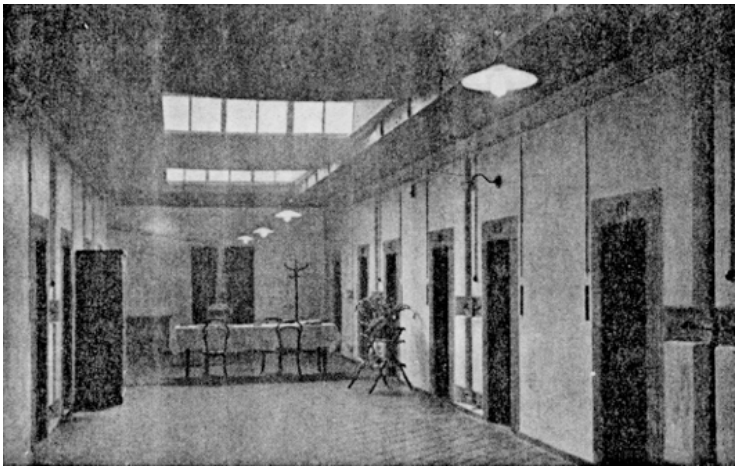
Stadelheim: Montag und Donnerstag 8–4 Uhr Nachm.

Neudeck: Vorm. 9–10½ h, Nachm. 3–4½ h) Nur Werktags

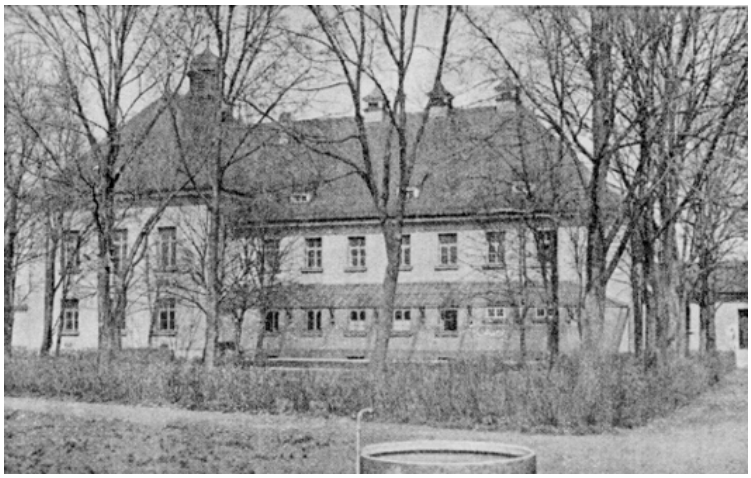
Cornelius-Straße: „ 9–10½ h „ 2–4 h (mit Ausnahme Samstags

Conrad-Straße: „ 9–10½ h „ 3–4½ h) Vormittags

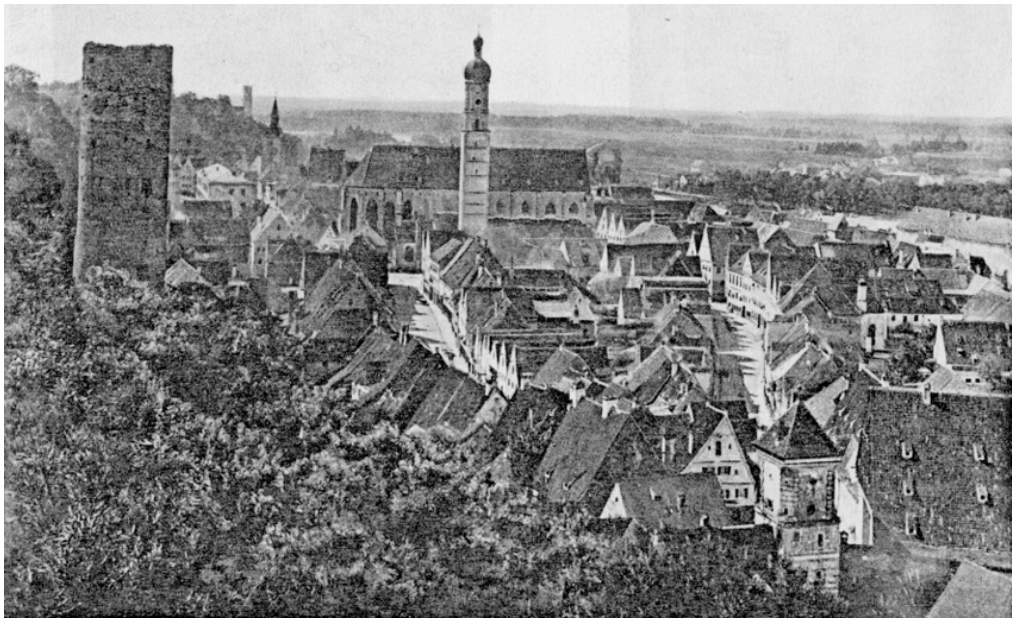
Picture 4: Visitor pass



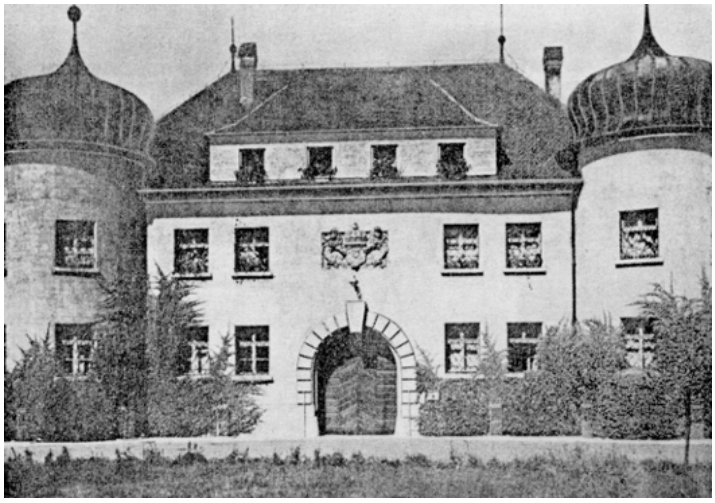
Picture 5: Preventive Detention Wing of the Landsberg am Lech Fortress



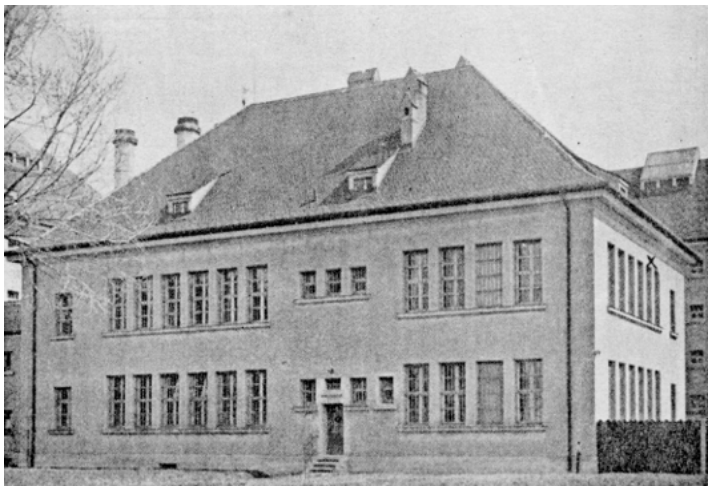
Picture 6: Prison Hospital (Hitler was housed here during his illness)



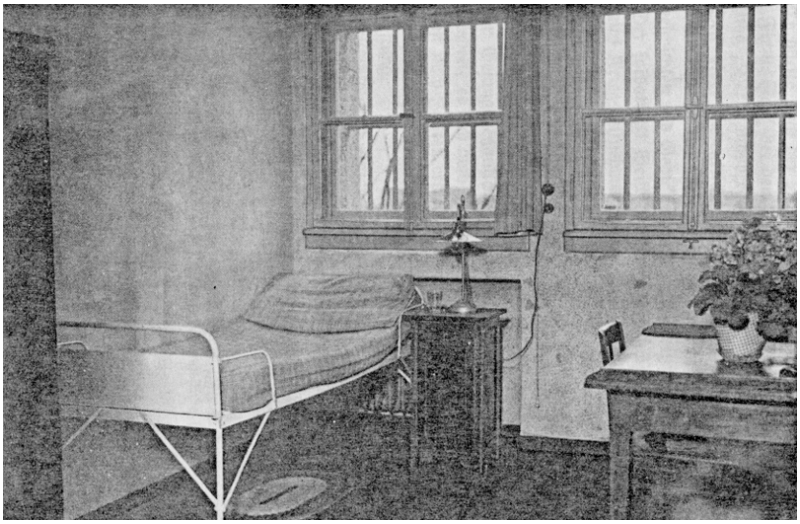
Picture 7: General view of Landsberg am Lech



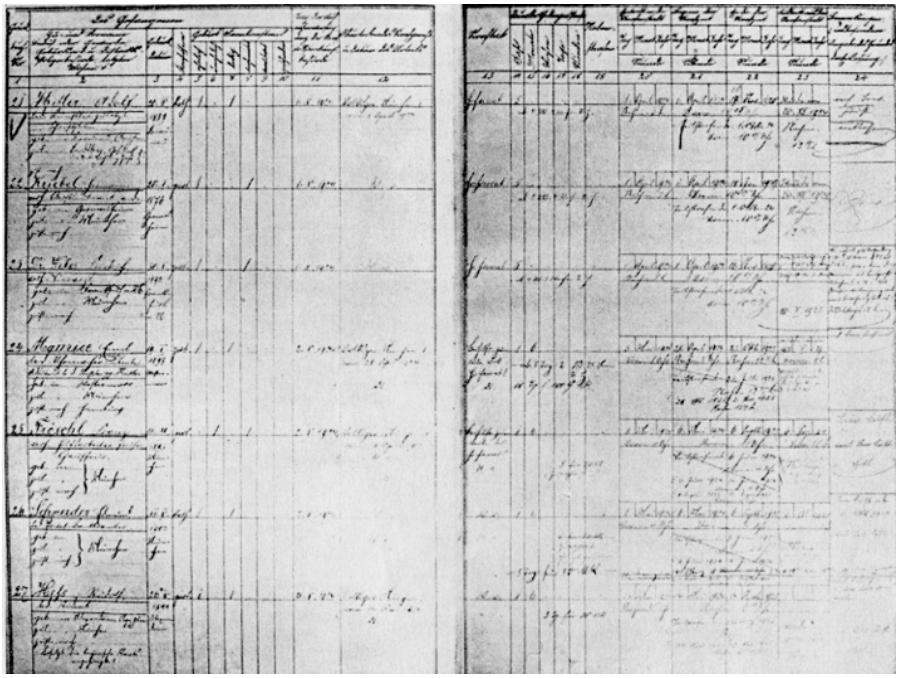
Picture 8: Entrance to the fortress prison



Picture 9: Landsberg am Lech Fortress - the prisoner's wing



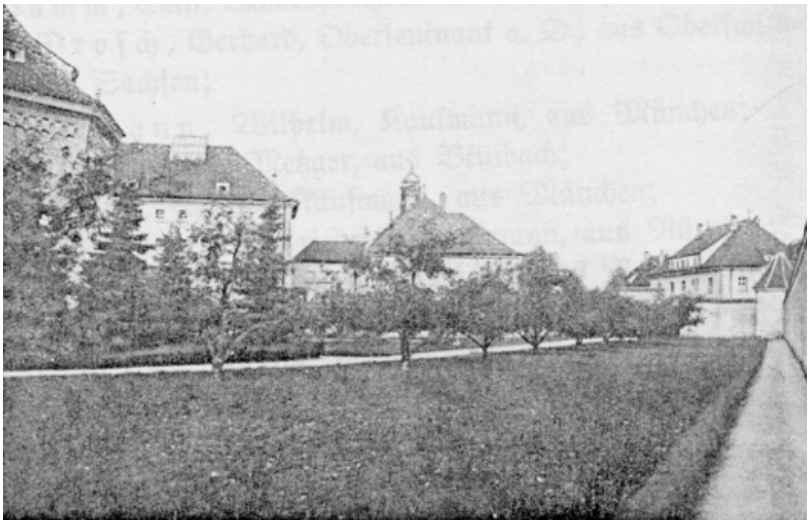
Picture 10: Adolf Hitler's room



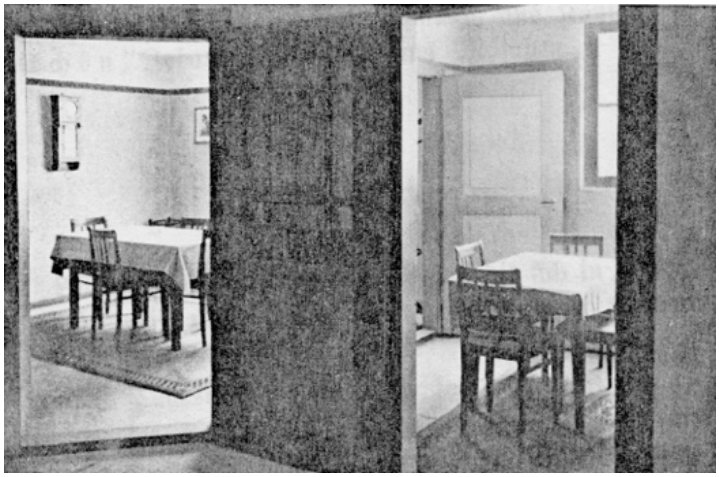
Picture 11: Excerpt from the prisoner register

Picture 12: Day room of the fortress; Adolf Hitler ate his meals at this table

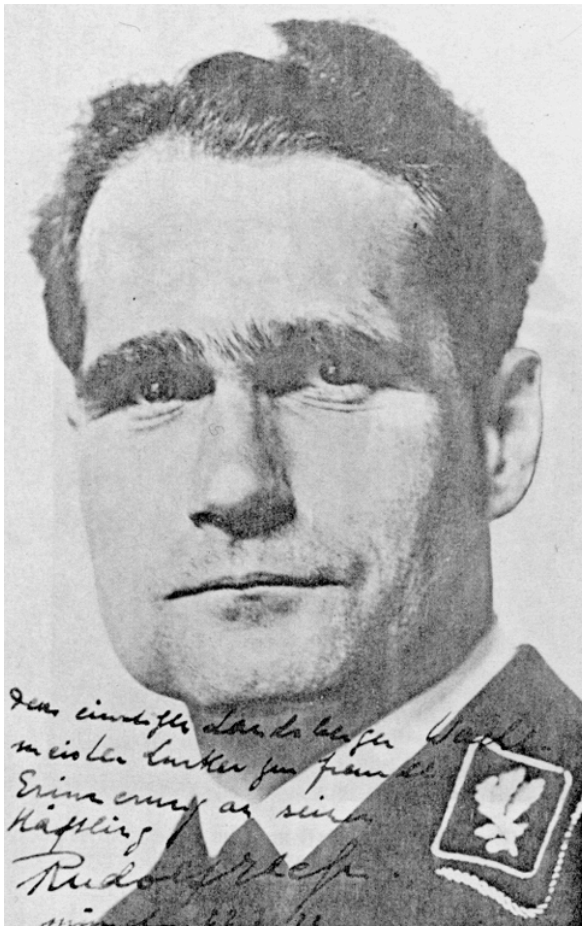
Picture 13: Hitler on his 35th birthday in the fortress's day room



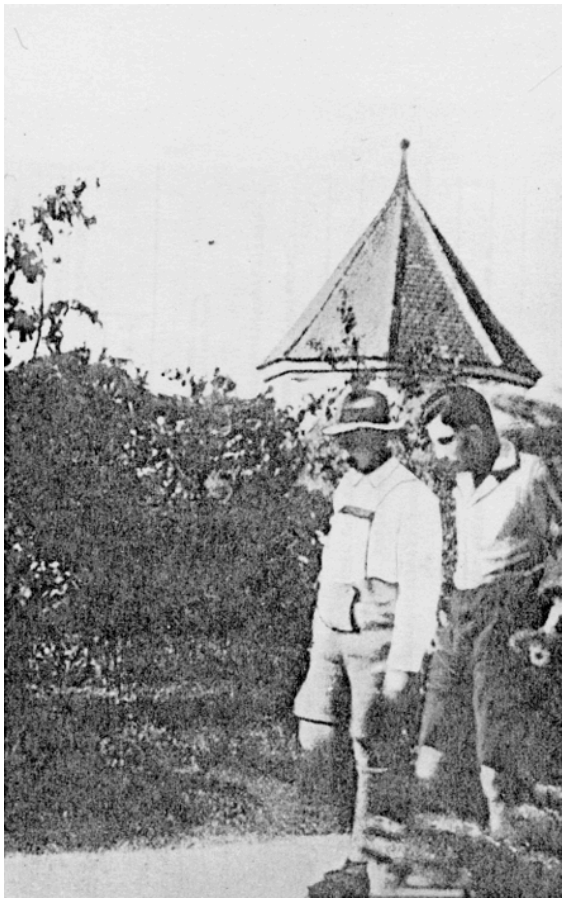
Picture 14: Fortress garden, where Hitler took his daily walks



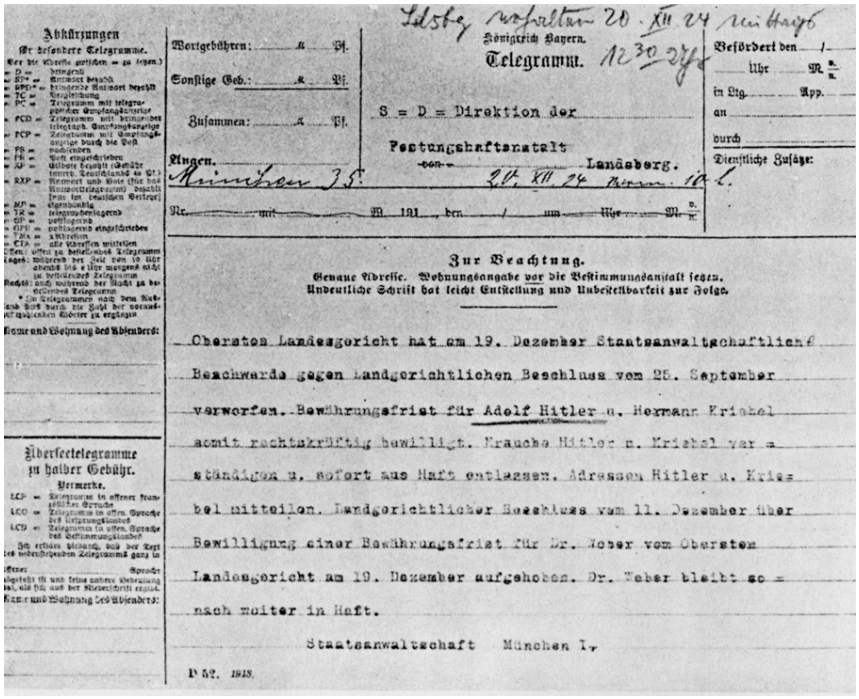
Picture 15: Hitler received his visitors in these two rooms



Picture 16: Rudolf Hess, Deputy to the Führer



Picture 17: Hitler with Maurice, a prisoner at the fortress, in the exercise yard



Landsberg Festung 20. XII 24 mittags

Abkürzungen für besondere Telegramme.

Wortgebühren: M Pf.

Sonstige Geb.: M Pf.

Zusammen: M Pf.

Königreich Bayern.

Telegramm. 1230 276

Befördert den / Uhr M

in Ltg. App.

an

durch

Dienstliche Zusätze:

S = D = Direktion der Festungshaftanstalt von Landsberg.

Augen.

München 35.

20. XII 24 Vorm. 10 1.

Nr. mit M. 191 den / um Uhr M.

Zur Beachtung.

Genaue Adresse. Wohnungsangabe vor die Bestimmungsanstalt setzen. Undeutliche Schrift hat leicht Entstellung und Unbestellbarkeit zur Folge.

Übersee-Telegramme zu halber Gebühr. Vermerke.

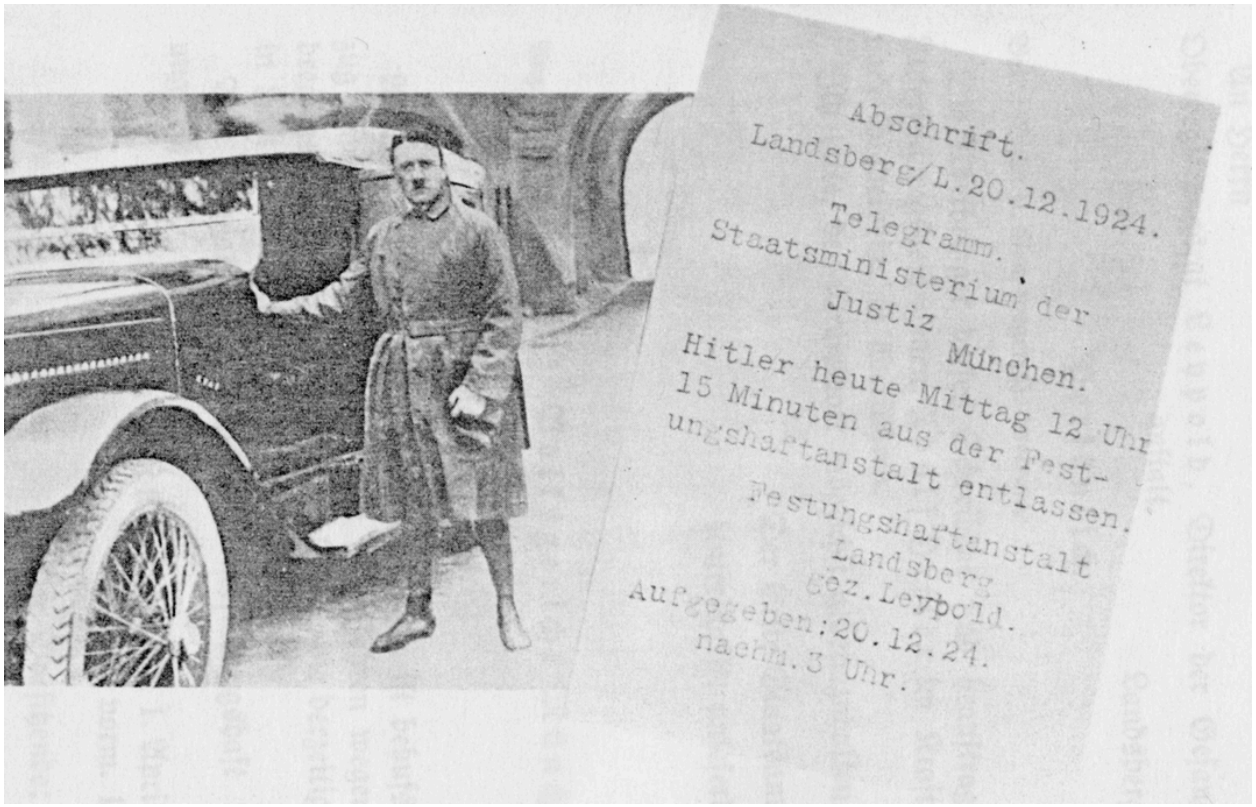
Name und Wohnung des Absenders:

Oberstes Landesgericht hat am 19. Dezember Staatsanwaltschaftliche Beschwerde gegen Landgerichtlichen Beschluss vom 25. September verworfen. Bewährungsfrist für Adolf Hitler u. Hermann Kriebel somit rechtskräftig bewilligt. Brauche Hitler u. Kriebel vorständigen u. sofort aus Haft entlassen. Adressen Hitler u. Kriebel mitteilen. Landgerichtlicher Beschluss vom 11. Dezember über Bewilligung einer Bewährungsfrist für Dr. Weber vom Obersten Landesgericht am 19. Dezember aufgehoben. Dr. Weber bleibt sonach weiter in Haft.

Staatsanwaltschaft München I.

D 52. 1913.

Picture 18: Telegram from the Munich I Public Prosecutor's Office announcing Hitler's release



Picture 19: Hitler at the Bayertor in Landsberg am Lech after his release on December 20th, 1924